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**THE MARCH  
OF  
PHILOSOPHY**

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## PREFACE

IN this volume, I have attempted to show the progress and vitality of philosophic thought, from the Ancient Greek period to the present day, as well as the need of a philosophy for our everyday life. To accomplish this purpose, I have, in the first place, tried to give a clear, concise exposition of the doctrines of the leading figures in the history of thought, supplementing it with a discussion of the five important philosophies: Materialism, Idealism, Pragmatism, Intuitionism, and Eco-Realism. Then again, by comment and criticism after each philosophy, I have attempted to show how each succeeding theory was a natural outgrowth of that which preceded.

This also demonstrates how all doctrines are interrelated, and by what logical process the five theories treated in Book I originated. Throughout this treatise, I have presented as far as possible an impersonal view of the cardinal tenets of the history of philosophy, leaving it to the reader to judge for himself whether the conclusions reached are appealing or otherwise. Finally, I have suggested what application each of us may make of any of the principles incorporated in each philosophy to our own conduct. I consider this as one of the chief reasons for a treatise of philosophy, because we so often hear the comment that philosophy is a toy for the amusement of the intellectual, without possessing anything vital to our actual life. Such an attitude does not accord to philosophy the consideration it deserves, and is, besides, most inaccurate. From this angle, I have attempted to treat of philosophic subjects in a manner which may be comprehended not only by the student but also by the layman who may be interested to pursue his enquiry into the subject.

## INTRODUCTION

THE term Philosophy evokes in our minds a picture of something detached from life and purely of academic interest. The moment the study of philosophy is recommended to the average man and even to the student, he at once gets the disagreeable sensation of being obliged to lift himself up from his material environment, to shed his earthly raiment, and gird up his loins, so to speak, to wage battle with a branch of human endeavor which may appear to be useless and senseless to him, but which he nevertheless deems necessary for the acquisition of culture. Not only is this the wrong view of philosophy, but this attitude is also inhibitory. It prevents one from cultivating the proper approach. It is first of all necessary to humanize philosophy, to make it attractive as a study and to show that it is an essential ingredient in everyone's life.

Once one develops a flair for philosophic research, there is no other subject so engrossing and so inspiring. Besides, every one has a philosophy of life, whether he is conscious of it or not. Each person has certain beliefs which guide him, which help him to fashion his life. All of us deal with certain ends, with purposes in view, we tend towards a certain goal. Our opinions and beliefs about things here come to our aid in selecting one plan as against another. This is philosophy in the popular sense of the term. Real philosophy differs from this because it is a critical examination of the grounds of one's beliefs. One does not accept them now as prejudices or as mere superficial likes and dislikes, but because reason shows them to be valid, based on grounds possessing the approbation of universal reality.

To illustrate: Suppose a dyed-in-the-wool native of the State of Maine were asked why he votes the Republican ticket, his reply most likely would be because his father, grandfather,

and great-grandfather had done so before him. This is an opinion based either on tradition or on prejudice. On the other hand, if he voted because he felt that the success of the Republican Party would result in placing our nation before the world of nations in the proper light, according to its universal significance; and, besides, if he felt that under its banner the ensuing prosperity would easily satisfy our material wants, thus liberating the soul for the free development of all its potentialities, his opinion would then assume a philosophic tinge.

To go one step further. Life is a process of thinking. Thinking about what? How to measure up to one's significance in the world, to the exalted position the human soul should, and does, occupy in a world which it may probe and understand perfectly, with little effort. That type of thought about things which helps one in subordinating all ends to one supreme goal is philosophy. If it helps one to identify the end of his life, the aim of his existence, the purpose of his striving with that which is fundamentally real in the world, it results not only in a well-ordered life, but also makes one feel more important and more willing to conquer all obstacles for the sake of achieving his heart's desire. Thus philosophy is worth while not only for its own sake, for the enjoyment it furnishes, but also for its pragmatic aspect, for its utility in furnishing the necessary encouragement in this apparent chaos around us.

Then again, it is intimately connected with many other interests in life—Religion and Science, for example.

Are you a scientist? Does that give you a right to scoff at philosophy because it is not practical enough? If you are a biologist, interested in the study of life, do you not need a knowledge of chemistry and physics also? Is it not necessary to understand the relation of your particular science to the other sciences? This is where philosophy fulfills a necessary function. It is general, comprehensive, universal—it is not limited to a particular realm of existence, which is true of particular sciences—but that is exactly what makes it so im-



portant. It is the source of the sciences showing their interrelation and connectedness. It has therefore aptly been described as the sum total of all scientific knowledge, or in Aristotle's conception, as the "Science of Universals."

Again, are you a theologian, a member of an organized clergy, or a religious fanatic? Do you then wish to discard philosophy because it conflicts with your religious beliefs? Admittedly, most religious dogmas are based purely on faith. In fact, many such dogmas not only cannot be demonstrated rationally, but are actually in conflict with any ordinary explanation of nature. "Miracles" can under no circumstances (although many exponents of religion have racked their brains to do so) be reconciled with scientific explanation. Philosophy cannot permit such dogmatic statements of belief to be incorporated as a part of its study. It is also evident that religious beliefs have from time immemorial been a product of a collective mind—a sect—a clergy—while philosophy is the result of individual thought. But granting all that, what have you, as a man of religion, to fear in philosophy? Does not life necessitate the existence of both of these compartments of the human make-up? The mere fact that faith is present and fulfills a necessary function shows its utility. The time may come when faith will be entirely supplanted by reason, when it will be rendered useless, like the appendix, but nothing has as yet appeared on the horizon to show that that time is near at hand. Until then, philosophy and religion should be considered as existing side by side, each serving its peculiar mission.

To conclude, a word must be said about the relation of philosophy to common sense. Thomas Hobbes, the English philosopher, said that everyone boasts of possessing as much, if not more, common sense than his fellow man. This feeling of equality is no doubt universally present. Why then do you feel so proud, so smug and self-satisfied, because you are endowed with sense, which is so common, and turn up your nose at a philosopher, who, admittedly, possesses the type of sense which is not quite so common? A president of one of

the large banking institutions in one of our large cities referred to a man of a philosophic bent of mind as being too visionary. Needless to say, his application for a loan was unceremoniously rejected. Is this the proper estimate of philosophy? That the answer is in the negative is clearly shown by the fact that so-called common sense already recognizes the problems which philosophy "follows through" to their ultimate solution.

The ordinary man on the street feels that there is a difference between appearance and what lies behind it. This is the foundation of prayer, when we address ourselves to an unseen power. Again, in times of great emotional stress caused by conditions around us, if we let ourselves be swayed by the visible causes, "going to pieces" would be the inevitable result. The saving feature is that subconsciously we glimpse around this confusion a stabilizing force, an anchor, an element that guarantees a final solution fitting and proper for our safety. Thus common sense distinguishes between appearance and reality. Philosophy simply goes further; it wants to know the ultimate reality. This is called the ontological division of metaphysics.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, all of us, although uninitiated into the mysteries of philosophic research, know that the cause before us is in turn an effect of another cause; the philosopher wants to know, besides, what is the first cause which no longer is an effect of anything. In this manner, the cosmological phase of metaphysics comes to the foreground. We may state further that everyone knows the difference between the means and the end which they serve to effect—also the fact that one end is in turn a means to another end—but the philosopher wants to investigate the final end which writes "Finis" to all means. That is Ethics. It is unnecessary to point out any other examples to convince one with an open mind that philosophy is not far removed from what we term common sense; it includes it, it must have it as its foundation.

<sup>1</sup> This paragraph is based in part on "A Defence of Philosophy," by Ralph Barton Perry, in which the author in a lighter vein, but yet most effectively discusses the relation of philosophy to common sense in the treatment of metaphysics, cosmology, logic and ethics.

How can that which embraces common sense be considered so nonsensical and so remote from life? True enough, the study of philosophy is not intended to engender money-making ability, its purpose is not to yield a profit, it is cultural, meant to train one to have a comprehensive view of the world of nature, of life. This makes us lead more useful lives both physically and spiritually.

But, say you, admitting that all of this is true, how is it possible to acquire a proper philosophy? The first and most obvious method is to study other philosophies, especially those of the leading figures in the history of thought. This history is the subject of the next inquiry.

The history of Philosophy may roughly be divided into three periods: Greek or Ancient, 600 B.C.—525 A.D. Medieval or Scholastic, 150–1600 A.D. Modern, 1450—. Greek philosophy is in turn subdivided into (1) Pre-Socratic Philosophers. (2) Socrates and the Sophists. (3) Plato and Aristotle. (4) Post-Aristotelian Philosophers.

BOOK I  
GREEK OR ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY



## CHAPTER I

### PRE-SOCRATIC PHILOSOPHERS. THE NATURALISTS

#### 1. *The Milesian School. Thales, Anaximander and Anaximenes.*

MANY factors were responsible for the origin of Ancient Philosophy in Greece. We may briefly say that the then prevailing religion, that the scientific spirit of the time, the sayings of the Wise Men, and the insatiable curiosity of the Greek to learn what lies beyond the visible world,—all contributed to some extent to this end. There is also no doubt that the fact that there was no organized clergy, which ordinarily would check the unrestrained study of the world, contributed materially to the free, intellectual development of the Ancient Greeks.

All the philosophers in this period, prior to Socrates and the Sophists, were known as speculative naturalists, because they studied Nature and what lies behind appearances. They dealt particularly with the problems of Substance, Being and Cause.

What is reality? What is the underlying substance out of which all things are made? What is it that forms the world beyond appearances? The Milesian school, composed of Thales, Anaximander and Anaximenes, attempted to solve this puzzle. Thales, the first Greek philosopher, said that all things are made of water. Anaximander, on the other hand, did not find it quite so easy to snatch at a known and popular element for an appropriate answer. He said that the underlying reality is an unnamed, infinite substance. Xenophanes later identified it as earth. Anaximenes said that air has the distinction of being the one element out of which everything is composed.

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What do these theories indicate as to the mental make-up of the first philosophers? No doubt their attempt to reduce all to the kind of thing present to the senses, which is so essential to life, appears crude and more or less childish to us, surrounded as we are by highly developed scientific theories. It must, however, be admitted that these theories contain a germ of truth in the fact that they are all monistic; they explain the constitution of the world by one substance. This monism exerted great influence upon later philosophy.

##### 2. *The Eleatic School. Parmenides (470 B.C.) and Zeno (490–430 B.C.).*

What is the nature of existence? Is it motion or is it change? Is the world stable, or is it in a state of flux? This problem was tackled first by Parmenides of the Eleatic School. He said that everything is unchangeable, motionless, permanent. Change and motion are deceptions of the senses. "The world or universe is eternal, immutable, immovable, continuous, indivisible, infinite, unique."

His disciple, Zeno, did not have an affirmative, positive philosophy of his own, but attempted to confirm and explain his master's philosophy by showing that if you insist upon the assertion that change and motion are valid phenomena, you become involved in all kinds of logical difficulties, or paradoxes. Two such paradoxes are particularly famous,—the flight of the arrow, and Achilles and the tortoise. There is no doubt that an arrow seems to move from one point to another, but it is also logically true that this line showing the arrow's motion is made up of an infinite number of points of rest. Logically then, asks Zeno, how is it possible for the arrow really to move when it only rests at different points? Therefore, he concludes, the apparent motion of the arrow is only a deception of the senses, because logic shows the contrary to be true.

Likewise, he demonstrates that if the tortoise is permitted to have a start over Achilles at the beginning of the race, Achilles could never overtake it, because at every point

Achilles would have to traverse one-half of the distance remaining between him and the tortoise, *ad infinitum*. Here again, motion or the fact that Achilles does overtake the tortoise is simply an illusion of the senses and is not the true reality.

### 3. *Heracleitus. (About 536–470 B.C.)*

Heracleitus, the greatest pre-Socratic philosopher, opposes this theory of Parmenides. He says that the very essence of being is motion and change; rest, sameness, identity is a deception of the senses. It is not possible to descend twice into the same stream; it is not even possible to descend into it once; we are and we are not in it, we make up our minds to plunge into the waves, and behold! they are already far-away from us. This is the theory of the Flux; the world is in an eternal whirl; the nothing constantly changes into something and that is incessantly swallowed up into nothingness. In this way, life and death, origin and decay are identical. To this Flux, Heracleitus finds it quite appropriate to add the conception of Fire as the underlying substance of the world. Fire is well adapted to a theory of transformation. The universe is an ever-living fire, which is periodically kindled and extinguished. It is constantly changed into vapor, water and earth, then it turns to fire again; this process goes on everlastingly.

What is the cause, the reason for the order, and unity of the world? Heracleitus is the first to answer this query. He realizes that the universal change, if unregulated, would result in chaos and confusion. He, therefore, introduces a universal principle of harmony, a principle of proportion—the Logos, which supplies the rhythm and measure for the universal Fire.

Heracleitus is thus shown to offer a solution for the three problems with which the Ancient Greeks were so engrossed: for substance, fire; for cause, the Logos; for being, motion, instability, the Flux. No one can possibly doubt that in view of the immature and undeveloped state of philosophic



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thought of his time, Heracleitus was very ingenious in his attempted explanation of the world. But this philosophy leaves us dissatisfied. Such absolute impermanence, such insistence on change, only results in pessimism. What is the object in striving, since even just as you achieve the end it is no more. This reminds us of Schopenhauer, whom we shall discuss later.

### 4. *Empedocles. (About 490–430 B.C.)*

The next pre-Socratic philosopher, whose doctrines deserve consideration, is Empedocles. Empedocles is an eclectic. He selects the best elements in the philosophies of his predecessors and combines them into a theory of his own. He agrees with Heracleitus that there is change and motion in the world, and he is also in accord with Parmenides that the ultimate realities are eternal and indestructible. He says that the world is composed of four elements, Water, Fire, Air and Earth, thus we see that he selected the substances which had already been advanced as explanations of the world by the Milesians and Heracleitus. He also shows that there are two forces in the world, love and hate. Love combines these elements; hate severs them. Furthermore, he explains that although the elements themselves never undergo change, their combinations are never at a standstill, constantly being torn asunder and re-combined.

### 5. *The Atomists. Leucippus and Democritus. (About 460–360 B.C.)*

The Atomists, Leucippus and Democritus, call for explanation next. They say the world is composed of an infinite number of indestructible particles or atoms. There are heavier and lighter atoms and they have little hooks attached to them. The heavier atoms move downward faster than the lighter, overtake them, and by means of these hooks, tack on to each other, thus forming the universe—all of this takes place according to mechanical law.

Before proceeding to the next and last pre-Socratic philosopher it is well to point out that the atomists are scientifically incorrect in their theory of the motion of the atoms,

because these original particles move in a vacuum, and all bodies, whether heavy or light, possess the same velocity under such conditions. This error was corrected later by Epicurus, who adopted the theory from Democritus. To be sure, once we eliminate the consideration that inequality in the weight of the atoms is the cause of the difference in their motion, the result is disastrous for the atomistic explanation of the world. For how then do the atoms tack on to each other to form the universe?

#### 6. *Anaxagoras.* (500-429 B.C.)

Anaxagoras, the next pre-Socratic philosopher, is also an atomist. He, however, differs from the others in two respects. In the first place, he believes that the atoms possess qualities such as color, taste, smell and the like, whereas Leucippus and Democritus asserted that they are devoid of all qualities. In this way they are known as quantitative atomists and Anaxagoras is called a qualitative atomist. Furthermore, the atomists believe that the atoms are regulated by mechanical law. Anaxagoras, on the other hand, stated that there is a World Reason, called *Nous*, which regulates and orders the world. This of course initiates the problem of Mechanism versus Teleology, which occupies the attention of many of the subsequent philosophers in the history of thought.

In conclusion, we readily see that these pre-Socratic philosophers were interested in the explanation of nature; in the solution of the problem of cause, some offered mechanical reasons, others had an inkling of a World purpose, of a World reason, underlying all appearances. In these theories the germ of many of the later intricate problems were planted; this germ later sprouted into full bloom, resulting among other things in the complex discussions of monism versus pluralism or dualism; mechanism versus teleology; materialism versus idealism. They were not seriously concerned with human relations, with Morality or Ethics. This subject occupied the attention of the next class—the Sophists and Socrates.

## CHAPTER II

### THE SOPHISTS AND SOCRATES

#### 1. *The Sophists.*

† THE Sophists are known as the Humanists. They did not discuss metaphysics. They did not study nature or the universe in its inanimate elements but their attention was centered on the problem of human conduct. The Sophists were teachers of rhetoric, of argumentation. It was a very important and necessary function in those days. Everyone was supposed to argue his own case before the tribunal at Athens and for that reason it was essential that one have a proper understanding of rhetoric and of the art of persuasion. The Sophists were particularly disliked by the Greeks for these reasons: In the first place, they all taught individualism—or the theory that each man was master of his own destiny, a free agent to determine his own course and conduct in life. Such individualism undermines the foundation of the state, which must be based upon a collective and common understanding, upon common standards. Again, the Greeks had very little respect for them because they taught for hire. The Ancient Greek mind could not tolerate anyone who made a profit out of philosophic teaching. Finally, they were especially censured because they made the “worse appear the better reason.” The argument was that since their disciples almost uniformly won their cases, and since they could not possibly be right all the time, they must have succeeded simply because they were able by argument and persuasion to convince the judges that the “worse is the better reason.” Certainly, this is not an admirable trait. At this point it is, perhaps, pertinent to

point out that Socrates was not a Sophist, because he did not offend in any of these three ways.

The most famous Sophist is Protagoras. He is noted especially for two principles. In the first place, he said that "Man is the measure of all things, determining what does, and what does not, exist." This is essentially an individualistic doctrine. In the second place, he was an agnostic in religion. He said, "As to the gods, I do not know whether they exist or not. Life is too short for such difficult enquiries." The next two Sophists, Prodicus and Hippias, are known as naturalists. Their theory was that in conduct and morality one should follow nature. Although they did not actually say that "Might makes Right," as a result of their teaching that principle becomes clearly evident, for in nature the stronger prevails at all times. Gorgias, the Anti-Naturalist, taught that you must not follow nature in morality. His main philosophy can be summed up in the statement, "My Station and Its Duties." Every one has a certain station in life. That station devolves upon him certain obligations. Life for him, therefore, consists in the fulfillment of such obligations.

## 2. *Socrates.* (469-399 B.C.)

In conclusion, we must say that the Sophistic individualism resulted in a great deal of discord and disorder in morality and human relations. Everyone was his own master and could do what he pleased. In the midst of this confusion and obviously unsatisfactory state of affairs, Socrates appeared. He wanted to re-introduce order, harmony and uniformity into moral relations between men. His main contention was that "Virtue is Knowledge." This simply means that if one is aware of what he is about, if one understands all the conditions surrounding his acts, all the consequences that might ensue therefrom, he cannot but act virtuously and properly. Socrates impresses us with the fact that "Virtue is Knowledge" is a uniform standard, one that applies to all, one that can be a guide for all.

*Method.* Besides this doctrine Socrates is also famous for several other things. He is very well known for his use of the dialogue method, which always took the form of question and answer. Socrates would continually question his opponent, and after eliciting admissions, would interrogate him still further; in this way the entire subject was developed to the perfect satisfaction of Socrates. Furthermore, he always insisted upon defining his subject prior to commencing any discussion of it. It is very clear that often participants in a debate on a particular subject may continue arguing for hours on end, only to discover that each had been viewing it from a different angle. This must be avoided. Socrates always defined his subject so clearly, so definitely, that no one could possibly be misled. To guard even more against this very common error of debaters, Socrates also divided his subject into its different branches—a method recommended by Descartes, two thousand years later. Inference, so comprehensively treated by Aristotle, was customarily employed by this remarkable man. He would start from conclusions or premises admitted by all, and then reach the results on controversial points. Socrates is also noted for what is known now as “Socratic Irony.” At the beginning of any discussion, he would simulate colossal ignorance of the subject, allowing his opponent to put forth his arguments very pompously and with the convictions of a well-informed person. At the end, however, Socrates would turn the tables, forcing his opponent to the wall, and demonstrating clearly that he thoroughly understood the subject, but that his adversary did not. From all indications it appears that Socrates derived huge enjoyment from this “cat and mouse” game.

*Teleology.* Socrates is a teleologist; he believes that nature exhibits a purpose in all its branches. To illustrate: we possess legs for the purpose of locomotion, a tongue for tasting, eyes for seeing, and intellect for apprehending. From this we can readily conclude that Socrates was a firm believer in the existence of the gods; only such intelligent beings can account for the presence of design in the universe. Socrates

is also utilitarian in his Ethics. . . He believes that the pleasurable is good and the painful is bad. This finds an echo in later periods of philosophic thought—beginning with Epicurus and appearing in as recent a moral code as that of John Stuart Mill.

Surely now we may ask what is the cause of this unparalleled popularity which Socrates enjoys? The doctrines he taught his followers clearly account to some extent for it. But the major contribution is the fact that Plato, his disciple, employs the character of Socrates in order to develop his own philosophy in his dialogues. This added materially to the perpetuation of the reputation of Socrates throughout the ages. Reference is here made to the *Apology* and the *Protagoras*.

*Trial.* The *Apology* treats of the trial of Socrates. Socrates has been accused of two charges by his adversaries. In the first place, he was charged with corrupting the youth by teaching them to make "the worse appear the better reason." Secondly, he was accused of denying the existence of the gods. Socrates, defending himself, as was the custom in Ancient Greece, refutes both of these charges. He shows that he was not a Sophist; therefore it was not his aim to make "the worse appear the better reason"; that in fact he always taught his disciples, in addition to proper behavior, to argue rationally, truthfully.

The adversaries of Socrates had a very serious grievance against him—the fact that their children, his disciples, made them appear foolish in argument. Just imagine a parent, a contemporary of Socrates, an Athenian, who pompously and vainly displayed his superiority on all occasions. Just imagine this proud man sitting at the dinner table surrounded by his family partaking of a very appetizing meal. Finally, as is customary at all dinners, the father begins a discussion of a popular subject, politics, for example, addressing his remarks to the oldest child, who happens to be a Socratic adherent. The parent makes sweeping statements about voting for a Republican Senator, and the young offspring inno-

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cently asks why; the parent explains that the Republican votes on all public questions properly and wisely. The child still does not see why the Democrat, simply by virtue of being a Democrat, must be condemned without a trial. In this way the argument is continued until the father is wholly confused and feels keenly his impotency in convincing his own son, who formerly would have accepted his statement without a murmur. Such a sensation was extremely unpleasant, and the parent felt it showed disrespect for him. For this he blamed Socrates. This only shows that the young man employed "Socratic Irony" in reducing his parent to such a sorry plight.

Socrates clearly refuted this first indictment by pointing out that not only did he abstain from teaching his disciples to use Sophistic arguments but that he himself tried to serve as a model of good behavior for them to copy. True enough, he says, some of them turned out to be bad examples of propriety and honor, but that cannot be traced home to his teaching. He himself always practiced temperance, never engaged in anything other than the honorable and the just—all of this he impressed upon his followers. How then, he asks, do his prosecutors charge him with teaching lack of respect for parents, and with other such unfounded accusations?

The second charge, that he "denied the existence of the gods," Socrates refuted very simply by pointing out that whenever he undertook any serious task, he consulted the oracle at Delphi to learn the wish of these Divine Beings. At this time, it is perhaps well to point out that this oracle always gave equivocal answers to any questions, which made it impossible to trap her. Socrates also directed attention to his teleological teaching to prove that he believed in the gods, because they are responsible for nature exhibiting a purpose in all directions, especially with reference to the human body. Socrates very often referred to a divine voice which directed him what to do in a particular case—this no doubt represents what we call conscience. Notwithstanding all of these argu-

ments, both charges were sustained, although not by the overwhelming majority that might have been expected under the circumstances.

After Socrates was found guilty but prior to passing sentence, the judges offered him the opportunity to impose a penalty upon himself. Socrates suggested thirty minnæ, or a matter of perhaps six cents in our currency. Now it appears extremely foolish for Socrates to have treated the matter so lightly—a matter involving such serious consequences. Perhaps he did not dream that a man of his fame would be severely punished, or he in fact was too proud to admit that he was wrong. His behavior irritated his judges, and Socrates was sentenced to death. He elected to die by drinking hemlock. The manner in which the final curtain descends on his life is beautifully described in the *Phædo*. As the jailer brings in the cup of poison Socrates says:

You, my good friend, who are experienced in these matters, shall give me directions how I am to proceed. The man answers: You have only to walk about until your legs are heavy, and then to lie down, and the poison will act. At the same time he handed the cup to Socrates, who in the easiest and gentlest manner, without the least fear or change of color or feature, looking at the man with all his eyes . . . took the cup and said 'What do you say about making a libation out of this cup to any god? May I or not?' The man answered: We only prepare, Socrates, just so much as we deem enough. I understand, he said. . . . Then holding the cup to his lips, quite readily and cheerfully he drank off the poison . . . and at the moment, Apollodorus, . . . broke out into a loud cry. . . . Socrates alone retained his calmness: What is this strange outcry? he said. . . . Be quiet then, and have patience . . . and he walked about until, as he said, his legs began to fail and then he lay on his back, . . . and the man who gave him the poison now and then looked at his feet and legs; and after a while he pressed his foot hard and asked him if he could feel; and he said No; and then his leg, and so upwards and upwards, and showed us that he was cold and stiff. . . . He was beginning to grow cold about the groin, when he uncovered his face . . . and said (they were his last words)—he said: Crito, I owe a cock to Asclepius; will you



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remember to pay the debt? . . . but in a minute or two a movement was heard and the attendants uncovered him; his eyes were set, and Crto closed his eyes and mouth.

*Morality.* The dialogue by which Plato develops the Socratic moral theory most exhaustively, is the *Protagoras*, named after the Sophist. It presents several Sophists, Socrates and some of his disciples in a discussion of virtue. Socrates in his usual manner attempts to force Protagoras into certain admissions. Protagoras says that virtue can be taught because, otherwise, how do the Athenians punish the non-virtuous and reward the virtuous? What is this virtue? asks Socrates. Protagoras, goaded on by the Socratic darts, very pompously goes on a verbal rampage. He says that it consists of wisdom, courage, temperance, justice and holiness. These five parts are entirely distinct from each other. Socrates, at first appearing to be ignorant of the subject, finally, by very skillful manipulations, extracts from Protagoras the fact that at least four of these parts of virtue, excluding that of courage, really are similar to each other. In fact, Protagoras admits that these four have the same opposite or contrast, namely folly or ignorance. In other words, the man who possesses wisdom necessarily is opposed to him who is ignorant, the temperate individual is contrasted with him, who, because of ignorance, foolishly does things to excess; the just knows what he is about, as distinct from him who is swayed by folly to commit injustice. Thus Protagoras is led step by step to make concessions to the Socratic demands, until in desperation he holds to one fort, that courage cannot be identified with the other four parts. But, asks Socrates, what is courage? Is not the courageous man one who knows how to behave in moments of danger, who evaluates properly the particular situation? Protagoras must of course admit, though unwillingly, that ignorance is also the cause of cowardice. Consequently, since the five parts of virtue have the same opposite, by the familiar axiom that all things equal to the same thing are equal to each other, they must really be identical, or virtue is one.

Also this opposite of virtue has been shown to be ignorance; virtue, therefore, must consist of knowledge. The original Socratic doctrine "Virtue is Knowledge" is thus brought forcefully to the attention of philosophy. This analysis of the Protagoras may appear very technical, but Socrates has another card up his sleeve by which to prove his point. All agree that the pleasurable is good and the painful bad. How then will you select pleasure as against pain? How, again, will you choose the more, as against the less, pleasurable? Knowledge is the only possible, valid power which can help us here. It is the instrument by which we may acquire the good and avoid evil or pain. Therefore, knowledge has again been shown to be identified with virtue. This doctrine exerted the greatest influence upon Plato, which we shall discuss under the Platonic theory of Ideas.

*Character.* The character of Socrates is best depicted by another Platonic dialogue, the Crito. It pictures Socrates in his cell just prior to his death. At that time a great many of his friends urge him to escape. They assure him that every possible provision has been made to insure success; they offer him, besides, the means to live leisurely in another country. Very few could resist a temptation of this sort, especially when on the brink of death. Socrates, however, refused the offer. He adduced several reasons for his course. In the first place, his children in Athens will never be able to live down the shame of having a father, an escaped felon. This attitude is very difficult for us to understand, for is it not humiliating enough to have as one's father a convicted felon, who has been executed? Perhaps Socrates refers to the shame of children for a father who was too cowardly to face his just punishment—just from the standpoint of the laws of the country which imposed the death penalty. In the second place, what would he at his age do in a strange country? How could he get along? What friends could he make? In fact, he feels that he would be a traitor to his government and to his old friends to escape the punishment meted out to him by the state. Lastly, he points out that all his life he

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taught his disciples to obey the laws of their country. If he were not to practice what he preached, his entire life's work would be rendered futile. Certainly this is not the course that his own friends would recommend to him to pursue.

To sum up, then, Socrates was a humanist. He concerned himself particularly with human relations, conduct, ethics. He was not much interested in the cold-blooded facts of metaphysics. He was not a naturalist; he did not speculate about nature or the underlying reality, which occupied the exclusive attention of his predecessors. Socrates, however, is much more important in the history of philosophy because of his influence upon Plato, Aristotle and subsequent philosophers, than for the doctrines which he himself had taught. The next subject of study, therefore, is the philosophy of Plato.

## CHAPTER III

### PLATO (427-347 B.C.)

#### 1. *Life.*

PLATO was born in Athens in 427 B.C., of a distinguished family. He became a disciple of Socrates at the age of twenty, when he decided to devote his life to philosophy. He studied with Socrates for a period of eight years, and after the death of his master, he traveled in Egypt, Italy and Sicily. In Sicily, he was invited into the Court of Dionysius I, where he became so obnoxious that he was kidnapped and put to sale in the slave-market. A friend ransomed him and sent him to Athens about 388 B.C. There he established his school of philosophy in a garden near a gymnasium, called the Academy. Here he spent the last forty years of his life, numbering among his pupils his great rival, Aristotle. Plato was consulted in reference to the re-organization of the government at Syracuse, but his scheme failed, due to the violent opposition that developed to his measures. He died in 347 B.C., at the age of eighty-one.

Plato was born an aristocrat. This, no doubt, had a great deal of influence upon his philosophy. His desire for an ideal aristocracy or republic, his argument for the education of the upper classes, his insistence on the fair treatment of women in the state, offering them the opportunity to become rulers and soldiers on an equal footing with men, and a great many of his other doctrines can most certainly be traced to his noble birth.

#### 2. *Influence of the Pre-Socratic Philosophers upon Plato.*

Plato, as may be expected under the circumstances, was very much influenced by his predecessors. In the *Timaeus*, in

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which he discusses the creation of the world of nature, he shows that nature consists of four elements, water, fire, air and earth. Empedocles had already mentioned these elements and showed that they compose this world of sense; he in turn had adopted them from the Milesians and Heracleitus. In his conception of the world of Ideas, the influence of Parmenides is readily traceable—this world of Ideas never changes, its constancy and identity constitute its most essential characteristics. His Idea of the Good is more or less similar to the Logos of Heracleitus and the Nous of Anaxagoras—all of these emphasize that the world is controlled by a universal intelligence, impersonal and teleological in character. Thus Plato is an eclectic to a large extent; this is by no means to be taken as a reflection on his line of thought, for the wonder of it is that although he started with such meager material, he was able to lift himself to such supreme heights.

### 3. *Influence of Socrates upon Plato.*

But the greatest source of inspiration for Plato was the philosophy of Socrates. At this point we may recall that Socrates was very much put out by the moral teaching of the Sophists, who urged each one to follow his individualistic tendencies; he attempted to remedy this by furnishing us with a single rule of conduct which everybody may follow. This rule "Virtue is Knowledge" is the same criterion for all; it is applicable to all situations and to all problems; it has a most general application; in short, it is a "universal" standard. This theory of a "universal" inspired Plato's conception of a world of universals, or a world of Ideas. What is this Platonic Idea? At the very outset it may be defined as neither mental nor physical. It is not the ordinary idea in the mind which can be eliminated at will, nor is it a physical object, which may be divided or destroyed. It is, says Plato, a really existing thing; but where is it to be found? Not in the mental world with which we are familiar nor in the physical world of nature—it has its real existence in an intelligible world of its own. Furthermore it serves as the universal model

for a great many of the particular objects in this world which express its nature and essence. To illustrate: take a statue expressing beauty, a beautiful woman, an exquisite piece of architecture—all typify beauty, yet they are so widely different. How, asks Plato, can so many divergent subjects be united in this exhibition of the beautiful unless there is a universal standard of beauty which they all follow—an Idea of Beauty? The same is true of any other universal represented by things in nature, chair, table, man, goodness and the like. Thus we conclude that the Idea has universal application similar to the Socratic universal. Socrates, however, limits his theory only to morality, while Plato's world of Ideas is all-inclusive.

The second important influence of Socrates upon Plato is in the use of the dialogue method. Plato, like his master and teacher, employs this method to promote his philosophic thought. In fact, Plato's writings are known as his Dialogues. While these are the tangible effects of Socrates upon Plato, we can entertain no doubt that the spiritual, intangible influences on Plato due to his close association for many years with his preceptor are immeasurable in their results.

Plato exerted a tremendous influence upon subsequent thought. He is essentially a dualist. He draws a line of demarcation between the spirit and the flesh, between body and mind, the Idea and the particular object. Such dualism lends itself easily to the popular mind. The lay understanding, too, conceives of body and mind as distinct—in philosophy this doctrine was particularly emphasized by Descartes, although modern theories discard dualism in favor of monism. Plato's conception of the Idea of the Good, which is teleological in character, recalls to mind the later problem of *mechanism* versus *teleology*. Theology was especially affected by Plato's division between spirit and flesh; it was a ready-made doctrine for the Scholastic purpose of emphasizing the spiritual phase of life at the expense of the corporeal. Then, too, the mathematical method emphasized by Plato greatly influenced subsequent scientific thought. Des-

cartes used it, and Spinoza employed it exclusively in the "Ethics."

Plato's philosophy may be divided into two main branches: Metaphysics and Ethics.

#### 4. *Metaphysics. World of Ideas.*

Plato conceives of two worlds—the world of sense, the world of particular objects, a world which is presented to us in our daily life, a world in which we move and strive to achieve our ends; on the other hand, a world of Ideas, a world of permanence, a world of universals. We have already seen what this world of Ideas signifies; we found that Plato considers it far more real and indestructible than this world of nature, the objects of which are in a constant Flux, in the Heraclitean sense. But he goes even further to show his utter contempt for these things in the world which assume such significance to us in our daily struggle. He says the world of sense is a copy or an imitation of the world of Ideas. Therefore, just as in the world of sense there is an hierarchy of objects ranging from the lowest to the highest in importance, in the same way in the world of Ideas, which serves as its model, there must be an hierarchy of Ideas, ranging from the Idea represented and expressed by the lowest class of objects in experience, to the universal typified by the most significant natural objects. At the pinnacle of the world of sense we have the sun—it sheds light on all objects of nature and is indispensable to our complete understanding of all that it contains; at the peak of the world of Ideas stands the Idea of the Good. It is the sun so-called, of the world of Ideas; it shows the purpose, the good of everything in the universe, including both realms of existence.

This analogy between the Idea of the Good and our sun Plato develops in the Republic,<sup>1</sup> by the parable of the cave. Socrates says to Glaucon:

Imagine a number of men living in an underground cavernous chamber, with an entrance open to the light, extending along the entire

<sup>1</sup> Book VII.

length of the cavern, in which they have been confined, from their childhood, with their legs and necks so shackled, that they are obliged to sit still and look straight forwards, because their chains render it impossible for them to turn their heads round: and imagine a bright fire burning some way off, above and behind them, and an elevated roadway passing between the fire and the prisoners, with a low wall built along it, like the screens which conjurors put up in front of their audience, and above which they exhibit their wonders.

I have it, he replied.

Also figure to yourself a number of persons walking behind this wall, and carrying with them statues of men, and images of other animals, wrought in wood and stone and all kinds of materials, together with various other articles, which overtop the wall. . . .

. . . For let me ask you, in the first place, whether persons so confined could have seen anything of themselves or of each other, beyond the shadows thrown by the fire upon the part of the cavern facing them?

Certainly not, if you suppose them to have been compelled all their lifetime to keep their heads unmoved.

And is not their knowledge of the things carried past them equally limited?

Unquestionably it is. . . .

Then surely such persons would hold the shadows of those manufactured articles to be the only realities. . . .

Let us suppose that one of them has been released, and compelled suddenly to stand up, and turn his neck round and walk with open eyes toward the light. . . .

And if he were further compelled to gaze at the light itself, would not his eyes, think you, be distressed, and would he not shrink and turn away to the things which he could see distinctly, and consider them to be really clearer than the things pointed out to him? . . .

Hence, I suppose, habit will be necessary to enable him to perceive objects in that upper world. . . .

Last of all, I imagine, he will be able to observe and contemplate the nature of the sun, not as it appears in water or on alien ground, but as it is in itself in its own territory. . . .

His next step will be to draw the conclusion, that the sun is the author of the seasons and the years, and the guardian of all things in the visible world, and in a manner the cause of all those things which he and his companions used to see. . . .



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And now consider what would happen if such a man were to descend again and seat himself on his old seat? . . .

And if he were forced to deliver his opinion again, touching the shadows aforesaid, and to enter the lists against those who had always been prisoners . . . would he not be made a laughingstock?

In the same way, Plato points out that this world before us only furnishes us with the shadows, with the reflections of the world of Ideas, that it is only an imitation, and not a very good imitation at that. What then is the remedy? The philosopher must be so trained and so educated that he will intuitively behold the world of Ideas and especially the Idea of the Good; that the sun of the world of universals will be revealed to him in its true glory. Then he will be in a position to teach us, poor mortals, what the difference is between the temporary, ephemeral objects and the true essences, their models.

It must be clear to us by this time that the Idea of the Good supports Plato's entire metaphysical system. Consequently, he is anxious to elucidate it further. He says that Idea may be apprehended also as Beauty or as Truth. Thus the triumvirate of the Ideas of the Good, Beauty and Truth really represent the climax of the permanent world. Then again, they relate to three of the most essential compartments of human life: ethics, love and knowledge. Ethics we shall discuss under the second division of Plato's philosophy. Let us, therefore, now turn to his theory of knowledge and beauty.

*Knowledge.* What is scientific or real knowledge? The ordinary man using common sense, might say that if our idea of a table corresponds to the actual table outside of our consciousness, then it is a true idea. This is entirely too simple and too defective a theory of truth to suit Plato. He asserts emphatically that the particular table has no relation to the truth of the Idea of table. The soul, according to him, has in a previous existence perceived the Idea of table, and the particular object in this world simply recalls to the mind what is already innate as a result of its previous vision. In short, knowledge in the Platonic sense is intuitive, the

object of sense is not even a good copy of the Idea; it is simply an approximation of it; it causes the memory of the Idea which is latent in the mind to be revived. This, in the Platonic sense, is the only legitimate purpose which the world of sense serves.

How does one attain to the knowledge of the Idea of Beauty, is our next query. If Plato were consistent he would naturally conclude that art which represents the beauty of earthly objects is of great help to remind the soul of its previous vision of the Idea of Beauty. This would be analogous to his conception of the objects of sense in relation to truth. But, strange as it may seem, that is not Plato's thought on the subject at all. He derides art; he calls it an imitation of an imitation; the Idea of beauty is the original, the object of nature representing it is an imitation of the Idea, the picture of the object is therefore an imitation of that which already imitates. For example, the Idea of table is the model; the particular table is its imitation, the picture of the table is the imitation of the imitation. This type of approach to beauty Plato uncompromisingly discards. What then is the proper way to behold beauty in its true essence?

*Love.* The answer is love; love is the motive force by which one can proceed to perceive goodness under the guise of beauty. Love is the desire of the soul for the beautiful; it is not of the flesh, it is not of individual persons. It is an attraction to the universal. Love proceeds by the following steps in order to attain to the vision of the Idea: first, there is love of bodies, then of persons, then of theories, then of institutions, then of ideals, finally of beauty itself. In this conception of love, sex attraction plays a minor role. It can readily be seen that Plato differs essentially from Freud. Plato admits that love makes the soul yearn not only for a vision of the good and the beautiful, but to possess it and to possess it everlastingly. This creates, in turn, a desire in the soul for immortality. This desire, in the ordinary individual, necessarily means procreation. This is the only place where the actual sex element enters in Platonic love.

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That person who possesses talent of some kind can immortalize himself in some other way; the poet perpetuates his name by writing a masterpiece; the architect, by the creation of an exquisite monument. Thus we can see that as love recedes from its lowly origins, and ascends to the heights whence it can view the Idea, sex attraction loses its force and the pure, sexless, spiritual elements assume complete control. To Freud, on the other hand, sex is the underlying principle, not only for procreation but for all other ideals that one can possibly imagine—religion, art and similar aspirations of the human.

This powerful influence in human life, this weapon of love, is discussed by Plato in the *Phaedrus* and *Symposium*, two beautiful dialogues and very artistically developed. There is a great deal of nonsense in both of these dialogues which might have been used by Plato to enliven the conversation. Such nonsense about love is an especially fitting topic of discussion when the participants have eaten heartily and are somewhat under the influence of liquor; this is especially true in the *Symposium* in which all the characters are banqueting at the house of Agathon. Aristophanes, one of the revelers, who has been cured of the hiccough, says that the sexes were originally three, men, women, and the union of the two; Zeus severed the last, and ever since, the two halves have gone about looking for one another. Marriage is supposed to put an end to this nerve-racking search, and enable the sexes to go their way to the business of life. No one can possibly suppose that this picture is meant to be taken seriously. On the other hand, the statement by Eryximachus, the physician, that there are two kinds of love, the good and the evil, the noble and the coarse, in all things in the universe, and that medicine must attempt to produce harmony between them, does not advance the argument very far. It is a pure trusim. We must admit, however, that these speeches prepare the way for a real analysis of love, which Plato brings to us through the mouth of Socrates, in both of these dialogues.

This love is intimately connected with the peculiar constitution of the soul. The soul, Plato represents by the figure of a charioteer who is driving two steeds, the one a noble animal who accedes to the driver's every wish, the other an ill-looking villain who will not yield even to blows. The charioteer typifies reason, the highest element in the soul. The unruly steed represents the appetites and the desires which must be checked, moderated and controlled at all times. The other steed is will, which is guided by reason. This idea of the soul Plato employs in the Republic to explain what constitutes the ethical, the good and the just life.

Now we are ready to talk about love. It is a form of madness of the soul, referring particularly to the rational element. There are four kinds of madness, he points out. One is the art of prophecy, the other the madness involved in initiation and purification ceremonies which prevailed among the Greeks during Plato's life. Next we have the madness involving poetry, when the poet is inspired by the Muses, and finally, there is the madness which actuates the soul to get away from its earthly existence, to break off the shackles that chain it down to the world of sense, and ascend to the heavens, whence it can behold the vision of the Ideas, especially the Ideas of Goodness, Beauty and Truth in their nakedness. Every time the soul observes an object of beauty in nature it is reminded of real beauty in the home of the gods; it becomes more eager than ever to shed its earthly garments and return to its pure spiritual form. Such is the influence which love exerts upon the soul.

*God.* Surely the next question about Plato's metaphysics must be what is his conception of God? If you feel that he identifies God with the Idea of the Good you may conclude that God is impersonal, that God is the principle of goodness, that God is the purpose and underlying meaning of the entire universe. On the other hand, we may consider that the Timaeus portrays Plato's true conception of God. There Plato conceives of God as an artist who fashions a world out of

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matter; He is a personal Being, a Creator, an Artificer. At the same time, God is also pictured as fighting matter; He is not the all-powerful force in the ordinary religious sense of the word, but He must fight the principle of evil. He overcomes it in the end, then forms nature out of matter composed of the four elements, water, air, fire and earth, but that is not the end of His task. He must supply a soul to this material world. This soul is a combination of irregularity and order, of confusion and harmony, hence the world of sense possesses all such elements. It is governed by universal laws, yet its temporary character, its motion and change, focuses attention upon its contrast with the world of Ideas. Plato especially emphasizes the fact that this soul of the world exists prior to the matter in it; in the same way the human soul, which is fashioned out of the same substance as the world soul, also antedates the body. This explains how the human soul gets a glimpse of the Idea, in a prior existence.

*World of Sense.* The outstanding difficulty in Plato's metaphysics is: Why the need of a world of sense? It will be remembered that the world of Ideas is the permanent world, the only world of reality, the world of essentials, the world of universals. That world is the model which is imitated by the world of sense. Plato, as a matter of fact, does not concern himself in any way with this world of nature; it is simply hanging on, so to speak; it is an imitation and may very well be discarded. The question necessarily comes to one's mind: Why then have two worlds, why is not the world of universals quite sufficient? Plato gives a very fantastic answer to this. He says, God is good: goodness likes to express itself. Goodness must by its very nature be disseminated. Therefore, this goodness of God wants a world of sense in order to express its character. The same thing may be said of love. God is love. The Idea of the Good is apprehended as beauty which can be approached best through love. That too likes to express itself, therefore, nature simply functions as an expression of the world of Ideas.

### 5. *Ethics and Politics.*

*Ethics.* The next major division of Plato's philosophy is ethics. Here, as in the case of Aristotle, politics and ethics are so closely interwoven and so closely allied to each other that it is impossible actually to draw any real line of demarcation between them. Man is a social animal and cannot possibly develop outside of the state. It is, therefore, essential to talk of the ethical development of an individual only in relation to his life with his fellow beings in a social community or a state.

What is the goal of human life? is the first query in Platonic moral philosophy. It is not to be identified with pleasure, with honor, with wealth, with social position, because these are either too undignified for the human's final aim in life or they serve only as a means to an end. What then is a worthy pursuit that is appropriate for this rational animal, man? Justice, says Plato. This justice is further defined as a life of reason, a life in which one's rational nature sits in the saddle and enlists the will to aid it to suppress the appetites and moderate their demands. Just as the scientist studying the amoeba first examines it under a microscope to enlarge it, in order to see all of the minute characteristics which would otherwise escape the naked eye, so Plato diagnoses the composite elements of justice by magnifying it on a very large scale, by examining it in the state. Then, he expects to find it relatively easy to apply his conclusions to the individual. To this treatment of justice, he devotes the entire Republic. There Socrates discusses justice with a number of characters. Let us designate those who argue against Socrates and interpose objections to his pronouncements as his opponents.

Justice is first of all defined by the opponents of Socrates as giving every man his due, or rewarding your friends and punishing your enemies. The natural objection leveled against this type of definition by Socrates is that if one mistakes an enemy for a friend and vice versa he will then punish his friend and reward his enemy. The argument then shifts,

and justice is defined as doing good to those whom you know to be honest and virtuous men; harm to those whom you know to be the opposite. Here again, Socrates objects that it is not of the nature of justice to punish a man, which is tantamount to making him less virtuous than he was previously. The opponents finally say that justice means serving the interest of the stronger. It is just to obey the laws; the laws are made by the legislators for their benefit; the legislators are the stronger, in so far as the political community is concerned; therefore to obey the laws in reality means to serve the interest of the stronger. The answer to this is known as the famous Socratic doctrine of the "art of wages." Socrates points out that in every art, the artist practices his art not for his own sake but for the benefit of some one other than himself. For example, a physician practices the art of medicine, not for the sake of curing himself, but for the purpose of helping his patients. In the same way the legislator practices the art of legislation not for the purpose of benefiting himself, but for the sake of the governed, the subjects. By the previous definition these are the weaker in the political community; therefore to obey the laws really turns out to mean serving the interest of the weaker. This preliminary skirmish causes the Socratic opponents to beat a hasty retreat; but the question is still open, what is justice? The suggestions made by Socrates that they should have recourse to the state in order to get to the bottom of the nature of the subject is quickly adopted. We turn now to an inquiry concerning the evolution and development of the political community.

*Politics.* In the good old days, says Socrates, the state was a very small affair, there were few interests occupying the attention of its constituents, there was no cogent need for a comprehensive division of labor. As time went on, however, population increased, wants expanded, a variety of needs arose, and with this complex progress, there developed a crying need for a division of labor, an indispensable necessity for larger territory; in fact, all our present political, perplexing questions demanded a solution. How should an ideal state behave

under these circumstances? How should an ideal political unit arrange its respective elements in order to promote the greatest happiness, harmony and well-being among its members? This is where the Aristocracy, so dear to Plato, takes root.

The Aristocracy is the most ideal embodiment of political justice. It consists of philosophers at the helm, soldiers, the willing serfs of these governors, and an artisan or producing class consciously directing their efforts to support the higher two classes. By thus satisfying their need for material wants, the philosophers and the military men are able to devote themselves wholly to the administration of affairs of state. But how, you may properly ask, does this even remotely bear the slightest relation to justice? Let us, at this point, refer to the Greek conception of virtue. The Ancient Greeks conceived of four cardinal virtues—wisdom, courage, temperance and justice. Surely, says Socrates, in this Aristocracy we shall find all four represented. The philosophers must govern, this personifies wisdom in the state; the soldiers will perform their tasks under the control of the philosophers, this typifies real courage. The populace, or the class of artisans, not boasting of the rational nature possessed by the philosophers, will very often attempt to get out of bounds. It is, therefore, necessary to control and temper them. This is done by the philosophers, who avail themselves of the aid of the soldiers in order to determine the limits within which the class of artisans may act and move in the state. This group of producers, if properly controlled by the military, personifies temperance. In this way, wisdom, courage and temperance are already present in the ideal state. What else is lacking here, that needs to be supplied by justice? True enough, says Socrates, the first requirement is for each class to do its own peculiar work well, to perform its appropriate function admirably; but we must go one step further. There must be harmony between them. Each must do its own work in relation to the others; the philosophers must govern well; they are obliged to call upon the soldiers to help them suppress



the working classes, to guide the populace not to overstep their boundaries. This ideal harmony, with the wise men at the helm, constitutes justice. In this state, the artisans willingly serve to maintain the upper two "parasitic" strata of society, because they feel that it is for the best interests of all concerned, that this condition be maintained.

Before proceeding to strike an analogy between justice in this ideal aristocracy and justice in the life of the individual, it is necessary to point out a few more salient elements in the Republic of Plato. The philosophers and the soldiers will be educated by the state. They will be first of all trained by proper music to develop an harmonious temperament. Then again, gymnastics will be a very essential part of their training; this will help not only their bodies but their minds as well. Lastly, the philosophers must possess no property of any kind; they must also not be burdened with private families. Lest it be considered that this type of community life, known in Platonic philosophy as "community of women and children," was meant to permit loose and licentious practices, we must consider that Plato expected it to be under the proper guidance of magistrates; being sanctioned by political and religious authority. The one thing that we must guard against in our rulers is not to furnish them with motives that might induce them to act selfishly. What interest has a philosopher to rule other than for the common welfare, since he can neither enrich himself by inequitable laws, nor apply the maxim, "to the victor belong the spoils," because he has no children or other relatives to whom to give sinecures, and his election does not depend upon the good will of the voters, in our sense of the word. Furthermore, in order to become philosophers, they must show the characteristics of the true philosophic disposition. These are an eager desire for the knowledge of all real existence, a hatred of falsehood, the contempt for the pleasures of the body, the indifference to money. They must be high-minded, they must possess gentleness, they must have a musical, regular, harmonious disposition. Then again, the philosophers must go through a certain set training, being

taught arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and dialectic, or the science of real existence. Dialectic will enable them to get a true conception of the World of Ideas; especially of the Idea of the Good, showing the significance of all existence. If the philosopher is a genuinely learned man he will always attempt to teach his subjects that the world in which they put so much stock is a sham, and always to lift their eyes to the world of Ideas. Plato, however, realizes the practical difficulty of finding such a genuine philosopher; he points out that philosophers as a class are held in contempt, because of those who only simulate wisdom. This artificiality renders them vain and pompous to an intelligent audience.

To sum up then, the ideal Platonic state or the Aristocracy consists of the philosophers as governors who are aided by the fighting class to temper those willing serfs, the workers. The harmony existing in such a state is justice. To the objection that such an ideal state is unattainable, Socrates asks: What of it? Are we claiming for it actual realization? Is the practicable aspect of the scheme even necessary to be considered? Needless to say this state is pictured as an ideal, which by its very definition can never be achieved. It is to serve as a model for all extant political units to copy and thus attempt to improve their actual constitutions.

Now, we are ready to devote our attention to justice in the individual. Here again, the soul which has already been represented as a charioteer driving two steeds, is now considered from a different angle. The soul is divided into three parts: reason, will and the appetites. If reason is so developed that it can rule, then it is wisdom, will obeying reason is courage; the appetites, being moderated and tempered by the will under the guidance of reason is temperance. Therefore, justice in the individual life is the harmony among these three different parts of the soul in which reason will govern, and aided by will, the gentle, tractable steed, will control the appetites, the desires, the passions. In short, a life of justice is simply a life of reason. In such a life, Plato rules out practically all pleasure; only the most necessary may be considered

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as an element of the just life, all others must be discarded.

To go further, Plato points out that there is a devolution of the state; the state deteriorates under certain conditions, descending to a lower level at each stage. The highest and most ideal is the Aristocracy, which has just been fully described. Then there is the Timocracy, in which the military class governs. Next is the Oligarchy, which means government by the wealthy, the propertied classes. Then comes the Democracy, which is a government by the masses of the people, and finally, the Tyranny, governed by a single tyrant.

How does this devolution take place? We start with the Aristocracy. Then the state becomes embroiled in war. At that time the leader or leaders who were responsible for winning the conflict are extolled in the public eye. They return from the battlefield and are borne on the shoulders of their admirers. The public in its enthusiasm elects them to the highest offices as the governors of the state. This has been true even in the history of the United States on several occasions—in the case of General Grant, for example. (The general public is still enamored of uniforms especially if worn by those who achieved victory.) These military leaders, who have not developed as rational a nature as the philosophers, enter on an orgy of spending. They finally become heavily indebted to the wealthy classes of the state. As is usual in the case of any indigent debtor, the creditor not only holds him in the hollow of his hand, but also loses all respect for him. So here, the wealthy creditors usurp the power of the military classes and become the governors of the state. This is the Oligarchy.

The propertied classes are much less rational than their predecessors in office; their interest is centered solely upon personal profit; all their legislation is directed to increase their possessions. They enact many laws for the taxation of the poor to fill their own coffers. Thus the state ultimately is divided into two classes. on the one hand, a few extremely wealthy; on the other, the overwhelming majority, poverty-stricken. The poor finally rise up, revolt and usurp

the power of the public parasites. This is the Democracy, which occupies a very low position in the scale of states.

Democracy is short-lived, however; it hardly comes into actual being. The leader of the revolt tells his followers that since he led them out of their servile condition, he should have their confidence in leading and governing them. He then elects himself king or governor of the state; thus a Tyranny comes into existence. Tyranny is the most unjust state of all, due to the fact that it contains no harmony of any kind, and the tyrant rules purely for his selfish interest.

By analogy there are also five different types of individuals. The Aristocrat, or Philosopher, is the highest and most ideal. Next is the Timocrat, the military man. Next is the Oligarch, the propertied, the wealthy man. Next comes the Democrat, who is simply a member of the masses of the people, and finally there is the Tyrant, whose nature has already been described. Here, too, a devolution takes place in accordance with very logical principles. The philosopher is the starting point. His son beholds the glory and power heaped upon the soldier. His impressionable nature is so affected that he is led to consider how futile it is for him to follow in the footsteps of his revered father, possessing no property and enjoying none of the other good things in life; always grappling with knotty philosophic principles. Even if he succeeds in solving the most intricate problems, no one will shower glory upon him. (This is psychologically true, for in our day, a popular baseball player is far more acclaimed than a famous scientist, as far as the masses are concerned.) Therefore, he adopts a military career. His son may find that his father's life is constantly in danger; that is especially brought home to him if his father returns from the battlefield, maimed, minus a leg or an arm. Not for him such an end. He prefers to lead a placid life; he engages in a life of commerce; he is the oligarchical man. His son, who spends more money than is good for him, which makes him impatient at any obstacles or opposition, becomes what Plato conceives as the Democrat, a man living without rhyme or reason, a man who is guided by

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no rational principle, a man who is simply controlled by passion and desire. Lastly, the son of the Democrat brooks even less opposition than his father, and wants no obstacles at all in his way. This is essentially characteristic of the tyrannical nature.

Thus far, Plato has answered the primary questions of the Republic. He has defined both political and individual justice. But the opponents of Socrates, at the very beginning of the discussion, asserted that the unjust man is happier than the just; that he enjoys honor, glory, social position and all the other desirable things in life. They also emphasized the fact that justice is only a cloak to cover one's iniquities. Without hedging, Socrates faces this problem squarely. Who is happier, the just or the unjust individual? Here too, let us first consider the state, then the individual.

The Aristocracy, being the most just state, is contrasted with the Tyranny, the most unjust state. In the first, liberty and the happiness of its subjects are preserved. There is harmony and an equitable division of labor; it runs like a well-oiled machine. Clearly that is a happy condition for its constituents. In the Tyranny, by contrast, there are conflicts, there is no adequate division of labor, danger to life and limb is a constant threat. The tyrant proceeds on his way and leaves havoc and desolation in his wake. Happiness is an impossibility. This state is therefore the most unhappy of all.

By analogy, Plato considers the individual. On the one hand there is the Aristocrat, the Philosopher; as his counterpart we have the Tyrant. True enough, the Philosopher, the most just man, possesses nothing; no private property, not even a family. We should expect him to be a most unhappy person, but as a matter of fact he considers his lot happily and calmly. He worries about nothing; he goes placidly on his way doing the work set out before him, fulfilling his proper functions in life. That clearly, says Plato, is a most happy condition of existence. On the other hand, consider the Tyrant. He apparently has everything the world offers. He possesses property, honor, wealth, a host

of friends. Everywhere he goes he is showered with honors and from all appearances is enjoying every bit of happiness that life can furnish. Yet when you look beneath the surface what do you discover? You conclude that the Tyrant is afraid to walk on the streets unescorted, that the Tyrant even fears that his food is poisoned. The Tyrant, having gained his power by deception, fears the loss of that power. He has no genuine friends except those for whose friendship he pays. He must always have a bodyguard and does not trust the citizens of his own state to serve as his protectors. He must import soldiers from another country for that purpose. To secure enough funds with which to pay them, he must rob his subjects; he must murder, he must go on murdering and robbing in order to cover up his previous robberies and murders. In this way he is not only threatened from without, but his conscience is constantly harassing him from within. He may aptly be described as an individual over whose head "the sword of Damocles hangs." Need any more be said about the wretched existence this Tyrant leads?

To recapitulate: Plato's conception of Ethics is justice, or a just life. Such a life consists of the four cardinal virtues, wisdom, courage, temperance and justice. In short, it simply means a life of reason. All other things are subordinated to reason. It is a very rigorous life that Plato advocates, it is a life in which pleasure has very little place, a life in which the lower elements are always subordinated to the higher; it is almost Stoical in character. Since the life of the individual is very closely interwoven with the life of the state, since life in the state is in fact the primary requisite for the development of the individual, what is true in the case of the individual in relation to justice is equally true in the case of the state. It has already been shown that the state, too, if just, will contain the four cardinal virtues that are so vital in our lives.

*Fine Arts.* There are one or two other matters which should be mentioned in Plato's philosophy—in the first place, Plato's conception of the fine arts. We have already seen

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that Plato considered art as the imitation of an imitation, and therefore it is to be treated with contempt. Plato also strenuously objects to the type of music which rouses the emotions. He would certainly take great exception to "jazz," which has been so popular for the past several years. He further objects to the type of play which deeply excites the passions. In his opinion what is most desirable and necessary is to develop an individual with an even temperament and a calm mind, placidly treading his way through life. In this he differs radically from his pupil and successor, Aristotle.

### 6. *Doctrine of Immortality.*

It is also worth while to mention Plato's conception of the immortality of the soul as it is treated in the *Phaedo*. There again Plato has a very fine dramatic setting in preparation for the discussion of this all-important subject. He represents Socrates sitting in his cell, calmly awaiting his death, and having a chat with a few of his friends. The obvious topic on the eve of his death is, What happens to the soul after the body is gone? Why do men consider suicide wrong, is the first query. Socrates answers, because everyone is a possession of the gods and it is their privilege to call us from this life when they so desire. Then again, Socrates points out that the philosopher is never unhappy in leaving this life. He craves to have his soul unfettered from its bodily chains in order that it may ascend to the heavens and observe beauty, truth and goodness in their nakedness. The question then is, How does one know that the soul will survive the body and will have the opportunity so to behold the Ideas? Is there immortality?

To support the argument for the immortality of the soul Plato adduces a number of reasons—in the first place, the principle of opposition. Opposites are always generated from each other, light from darkness, darkness from light, heat from cold, cold from heat, for instance. In the same way, death is generated from life, and it is impossible to write "Finis" at death, but we must say that life is generated from death again.

To confirm this argument, Plato introduces a second principle, the "doctrine of reminiscence." By this doctrine, Plato shows that the soul remembers things it has seen in a previous existence, otherwise, how account for the fact that uninitiated and uneducated people answer correctly certain questions, especially mathematical questions, which are put to them? Since then the soul has had a previous existence, it is not very difficult to conceive of it surviving long after our bodies turn to clay. Furthermore, Plato says the soul is a simple substance, indestructible, indivisible, therefore it is not subject to the laws of matter and must be immortal. Then again, the soul is the harmony of the body, the body may die but the harmony remains. The soul, too, is the very principle of life itself. How can the very principle of life contain, or be subject to, death? Finally, the doctrine of retribution gives support to the hypothesis that the soul cannot be mortal, for it must survive in order to be punished or rewarded in after-life for the type of existence it has led in this world. The doctrine of retribution as conceived by Plato is extremely crude: the virtuous soul will ascend to heaven, while the eternally damned will rot in hell forever. Between these extremes, some sinners will be given an opportunity to ask their victims for forgiveness; if successful, their purgatory period will end, otherwise, they will be obliged to return for further punishment.

To this discussion of the immortality of the soul a great many objections may be raised. In the first place, the idea that the soul is a simple substance is untenable in fact; the soul has been defined as a "plurality of psychical experiences comprehended into a unity not further definable." Descartes later adopted the Platonic conception of the soul and located it in the brain. The soul does not appear, nor has it ever been shown to be, a simple substance residing in a particular locus in the body, or in the brain. Then again, the fact of retribution seems to be entirely foreign to a man of Plato's character. Retribution is the type of belief which may appropriately be invoked by superstitious and crude religions, similar to the



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conception of "happy hunting grounds" in heaven, so prevalent among primitive Indians, but it certainly ought not to be incorporated in any argument used by Plato. He should insist in accordance with his idealistic temperament that the life of goodness be lived purely for its own sake, not because of reward; a life of evil is bad in and for itself, not because of the dread and fear of punishment in the hereafter.

Let us now say a parting word about Plato's theory of knowledge. We have already seen that empirical knowledge or knowledge acquired from the world of experience Plato rejects as insignificant in our desire to learn about the Idea of truth. This is pure rationalism, which means that there is a non-empirical element in knowledge, whereas empiricism, developed by the English philosophers, signifies that experience, and experience alone, furnishes all the materials for knowledge. To prove that the soul has had a previous experience of things, Plato depicts a scene in the *Meno* in which a slave boy with no training faced by questions of philosophers and mathematicians is able to display a knowledge of arithmetic and geometry. Plato teaches that experience invokes what is already latent, that the world of experience never proves the Idea but rather approximates it. Plato goes one step further. He divides the knowledge of this world and of the world of Ideas into two parts. The knowledge of this world is first guesswork, illusion, which is the lowest type of knowledge imaginable. Then beyond that there is belief, or opinion, which is a result of normal sense perception. In the other and higher kind of knowledge, Plato shows that there is first understanding, which needs science and mathematics and demonstration in order to reach and attain its goal. On the other hand, we have the dialectic in which the mind grasps the Ideas independently of all symbols. This is philosophy and it is the business of the mind here to analyze all the notions of science and mathematics and test their validity.

To return for a moment to Plato's metaphysics. We cannot emphasize too strongly the complete dissociation of the

Idea from the object of sense. The Idea does not divide itself up, imparting a particle of itself to each sense object that represents it; it is too lofty even to have the particular thing furnish an example of it. The most that can be said for the thing present before our eyes is that it is an approximation of the Idea. Plato, however, felt that nature exists and some explanation must be offered for it. This raises the question of creation, for a discussion of which we must study the *Timaeus*.

We have previously seen that God is represented there as an artificer who fashions the world out of matter. This matter is composed of the four elements, water, fire, air and earth, and the elements in turn are composed of number, not in the sense that we add all the objects of the universe to find how many things it embraces, but it is the substance of reality similar to the Heracleitan fire. The soul of the world Plato fantastically represents as being composed of two principles—the principle of regularity, of order, of harmony, which he calls the principle of *the same*; then the principle of irregularity, of discord, of disorder and confusion, which he calls the principle of *the other*. The combination of the two he calls *the essence*. That truly represents the world-soul, which antedates the world of matter. This essence God injects into the matter of the universe and in that way our world of nature is formed. Of this essence which formed the world-soul, Plato conceives God as fashioning the soul of the individual. Here again, Plato shows the relation, the close contact, between the soul of the individual and that of the world. The soul exists prior to the body, the ideal exists prior to the actual, the intelligible and unseen exists prior to the visible and corporeal.

In the *Timaeus* as in the *Phaedrus*, Plato develops the doctrine of the transmigration of the soul. The soul in a prior existence beholds visions of truth and goodness in their nakedness. But if the soul sins, it loses its wings and falls to the earth; it then takes the form of man. That soul which has seen most of the truth passes into a philosopher or lover, that which has seen truth in the second degree, into a warrior, the third into a householder or moneymaker, the fourth

into a gymnast, the fifth into a prophet, the sixth into a poet or imitator, the seventh into a craftsman, the eighth into a Sophist, and the ninth into a tyrant. So man may also descend into a beast and then return again into the form of man, but the form of man can only be acquired at all by those who had once beheld truth. The soul of man alone apprehends the universal, and this is the recollection of that knowledge which the soul attained when she was in the company of the gods. At the end of every thousand years, the soul has another choice and may go upwards or downwards. Only the soul of the philosopher or lover who has three times in succession chosen the better life, may receive wings and go her way after three thousand years. In the case of all other souls, ten thousand years must elapse before the soul can wing her way back where she once beheld divine visions of beauty, truth and goodness.

Thus everything in the whole universe, everything that one considers as an important thing in his experience, in life, acquires such importance and such significance purely because the world of Ideas is thereby aided in recollection.

In conclusion we may consider the chronological development of Plato's philosophy. In his early days he dealt with light ethical subjects, which interested his master, Socrates, most. We refer especially to the Protagoras in which the doctrine "Virtue is Knowledge" is so exhaustively cultivated. During his mature years, or in the middle period of his life, he dealt with subjects of metaphysics, with his world of Ideas. Reference is here made to the Republic and to the Phaedo. In the Phaedo he points out that the soul is the only instrument by which the human being can perceive the Ideas, because the senses are suited only for empirical experiences, but cannot possibly sense the essences, or the universal realities. This is another argument for the immortality of the soul, the point being that only like can assimilate like, and since the Ideas are eternal, indestructible, the soul which beholds them must likewise be eternal or immortal. Finally, in his last days, he acted as any other elderly man would. He turned his

attention to nature, to the gods, and to other matters pertaining to this life. The *Timaeus* is a product of this period.

### 7. *Conclusion.*

In accordance with the purpose of this inquiry the critical and important question now arises: What, if anything, is there in Plato's teaching which may contribute to the formulating of a philosophy of our own? Plato is an idealist, a rationalist, a defender of the teleological character of the universe. The line of demarcation which he draws between the world of Ideas and the world of sense seems to be entirely out of place in the ordinary philosophy of one's daily life. Furthermore, his utter disregard for the world of sense in which every individual appears to find his life's ambition is again beyond the comprehension of the common man. The fact that Plato denudes his life of justice of all pleasures, is another consideration which makes it impracticable for the humdrum existence most of us must of necessity lead. In short, Plato's philosophy is too lofty, too high up in the clouds, to warrant its being adopted *in toto* by the ordinary individual. Plato offends in many other respects as far as practical philosophy is concerned. His insistence on the ideal, his utter disregard for the facts of experience, his lack of sympathy for all those who are below the class of philosophers—all of these elements put his philosophy in a great many respects beyond our reach. On the other hand, there are many elements in his doctrine which are commendable. His psychological insight into human nature which prompts him to deny ownership of property and even family ties to the philosopher so that he may unselfishly govern the community deserves respect. His treatment of women is entitled to consideration, especially in view of the fact that his contemporaries treated women, if not with contempt, certainly with very little regard. He insists that women should have equal rights with men, they should have the opportunity to become philosopher-queens, they should also have the opportunity to serve in the military class. He insists that the difference between men and women is one

of degree and not of kind. His doctrine of common ownership of property found an echo later in all kinds of utopian schemes of communism. In short, many of his beliefs are very refreshing and almost modern in character. True enough, his doctrine of creation, his theory of retribution, introduce a foreign note into his philosophy. His conception of God, almost like a human artist, even if crude, does offer an explanation of the world of experience. It shows the contrast between God and matter, it also shows the reason for the existence of the world of sense in relation to the world of Ideas. There is always the possibility, too, that all theories which seem incongruous with the rest of his philosophy are not to be taken too seriously, they may only represent Plato's sincere desire to impress them in an effective manner upon his contemporaries.

In the final analysis one must concede that a life of justice is preferable to one of injustice, that a life of reason is to be preferred to that of emotion, that a life in which pleasure does not predominate is to be preferred to one in which pleasure appears to occupy the chief and central position. True enough, Platonic philosophy is too idealistic for everyday, practical purposes but here one can use Plato's own thoughts as an answer. Plato refutes the objection that his Aristocracy is too idealistic to achieve by stating that it is not meant to be attained in practical life, it is only designed to serve as a model for existing states to try to copy. In the same way, while Platonic philosophy is very idealistic and apparently beyond the reach of anyone engaged in practical affairs, it is a beautiful conception of a philosophic life which everyone ought to attempt to imitate as perfectly as possible.

Plato's philosophy leaves us with a feeling that there are certain incongruities inherent in it. It leaves us with a sense of dissatisfaction for many reasons, chiefly because of the light manner with which Plato regards the world of empirical experience. All of this Plato's successor, Aristotle, attempted to cure; his philosophy, therefore, forms the subject of our next inquiry.

## CHAPTER IV

### ARISTOTLE (385–322 B.C.)

#### 1. *Life.*

ARISTOTLE was born in 385 B.C. at Stagirus, a little city of the Chalcidic peninsula, called by its ancient name Chalcis, and died at the age of 62 in Euboea. His pupil, Alexander the Great, later overthrew the Persian Empire and carried Greek civilization to the banks of the Jumna. In studying the constitutional theories of Aristotle it is necessary to bear these facts in mind. They explain the limitations of his outlook, which might otherwise appear strange in so learned a man. His life throws a great deal of light on his conviction of the natural inferiority of the barbarian both in intellect and in character. "His apparent satisfaction with an ideal of a small, self-contained city-state with a decently oligarchical government, a good system of public education and no social problems, but devoid alike of great traditions, far-reaching ambitions," may also be traced to the fact that he was born in such a tiny community without a past and without a future. His father was the court physician and a member of a family which claimed descent from Asclepius and in which the practice of medicine was hereditary. It is not unlikely that as a boy he helped his father in dissecting, and it seems certain that he himself practiced dissection in later life. This early connection with medicine and with the court explains largely both the predominantly biological cast of Aristotle's philosophical thought and the intense dislike of princes and courts to which he more than once gives expression. Aristotle was a great biologist. He was much more successful in his biology than in physics, chemistry and

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astronomy, though not because he thought different methods were appropriate in biology from those applicable in the other sciences. In both alike he meant to study the phenomena as carefully as possible and to put forward only such theories as he was able to prove. But in the physical sciences much more than in biology, he was influenced by the existing beliefs, which it did not occur to him to doubt any more than it did to any of his contemporaries. Aristotle loved to define, he loved to classify. "He made the mistake of supposing that the main work of science lies in deducing conclusions from definitions, whereas the truth is that it is often only after a long study of the terms that we are able to make their meanings precise and clear, and even then we can deduce little or nothing from our definitions." All of these influences can readily be traced through his entire philosophy. Although one may not think very much of his success in solving all problems, few people have ever either described so many, or seen so clearly which are the most important.

### 2. *Classification of the Sciences.*

Philosophy may be defined in the Aristotelian sense as the organized whole of disinterested knowledge, knowledge which is carried on purely for the satisfaction that it brings in studying it and not as a mere means to useful or practical ends. True philosophy must be distinguished from sophistry in the fact that sophistry is the profession of argumentation for the purpose of making a living. Philosophy also differs from sophistry in the fact that sophistry uses general wisdom for profit, whereas philosophy or science is the disinterested employment of the understanding in the discovery of truth for its own sake. Logic in Aristotelian philosophy is not a separate science, it is only an instrument employed by all the sciences. Science or philosophy is classified into two branches: On the one hand, the theoretical sciences. Under this class we have what Aristotle calls first philosophy or metaphysics, mathematics and physics. On the practical side, he includes ethics, politics, economics.

Metaphysics deals with being *qua* being, the nature of existence. It is separated from matter and devoid of motion. We have already touched upon the problem of being in the philosophies of Heracleitus and Parmenides. Physics deals with objects which possess both matter and motion, while mathematics deals with objects which have matter but no motion.

### 3. *Logic.*

In Aristotelian logic one is particularly interested in the syllogism or inference, which he discusses very exhaustively. Inference had been employed constantly by Socrates in his famous arguments. Aristotle defines the syllogism thus: "Syllogism is a discussion wherein certain things, namely the premises, being admitted, something else different from what has been admitted follows of necessity, because the admissions are what they are." A more concrete illustration of the syllogism he gives in the following manner:

Major Premise: All men are animals.

Minor Premise: Socrates is a man.

Conclusion: Therefore, Socrates is an animal.

The syllogistic method, as will be shown later in the discussion of his theory of knowledge, is not always scientific, because the conclusion is by no means certain from the premises given. Consider this syllogism:

Major Premise: All animals that have no gall are long-lived.

Minor Premise: X, Y, and Z have no gall.

Conclusion: Therefore, X, Y, and Z are long-lived animals.

We cannot show why no gall gives long life.

Induction, another term discussed by Aristotle in his philosophy, is defined as "The way of proceeding from particular facts to universals." Aristotle insists that the conclusion, the universal law, is proved only if all the particulars have been examined and found to be true. A single contrary



instance, for example, a single instance of an animal which has no gall, yet is not long-lived, would upset the entire conclusion, as exemplified in the last illustration. Aristotle does not regard induction as scientific proof at all, because it is actually impossible to test all the particular instances. This brief discussion demonstrates that logic is not a specific science, but only an instrument employed by the sciences in the search for truth. The particularly interesting point about Aristotelian logic, however, is his "theory of knowledge."

Aristotle starts his theory of knowledge by scoffing at Plato's conception of Ideas. To him the Ideas explain nothing, they are useless. He calls them poetic fancies. Plato, as we no doubt remember from our earlier discussion, considers science or knowledge exact, like mathematics, and no sense data enter into it. Sense objects only remind us of the Idea by giving, not examples, but approximations. The Ideas are conceptual and not mere conclusions of sense experience. Due to the fact that Aristotle rejects this Platonic conception of knowledge, we would expect that he will formulate a theory in which sense data will play a very significant rôle. But that is not the case. Aristotle says that scientific knowledge consists of (1) the simplest truths not possible to demonstrate in any form, axiomatic, which can be observed only by the intelligence. (3) the more comprehensive truths, the more general conclusions. The most important part of scientific knowledge, however, is (2) the middle term. The middle term is the real object of science to show the why of things, and is the connecting link between the axiomatic truths and the rest of knowledge, or between (1) and (3). Thus, Aristotle also concludes that sense data do not enter into the simple truths of science, because they cannot possibly be observed by sense experience; such experience, according to him, only reminds us of these simple truths. Therefore, he differs in no material way from his teacher, Plato. Both conclude that scientific knowledge ultimately contains a non-empirical element, contributed by the mind. Plato, however, is more courageous in stating at the outset that scientific truth is above

sense experience. In the light of this discussion, one can readily see why the previous example of a syllogism in which we concluded that "all animals that have no gall are long-lived" does not yield scientific knowledge, because science must inquire why or how no gall gives long life.

Suppose, asks Aristotle, one questions the simplest or so-called axiomatic truths which are so important an element in scientific knowledge, suppose one denies these simple truths or is skeptical of their validity, what then? How can we silence such an objector, since an axiomatic premise by its very definition cannot be demonstrated to be valid? All that can be done under the circumstances is to allow him to adopt his premise, to follow it through to the ultimate conclusions and thus become convinced of his error. This is where dialectic serves its proper function. Its chief use is to show to him who does not adopt the simplest truths of science, the result, if you adopt his principles. It is not possible to prove that 2 and 2 make four, but you can show the absurd conclusion reached if you call it five.

#### 4. *Metaphysics.*

*Matter and Form.* Let us now turn to Aristotle's metaphysics or first philosophy. Here again, Aristotle starts by rejecting the notion of Plato as to the metaphysical constitution of the universe. We remember that Plato divided the world into two separate realms, one the world of Ideas, of essences, of realities, and the other the world of sense. The Idea was entirely separated from the particular object of sense which represented it or modeled after it. The Idea was considered form, the particular object matter, by Plato. Hence Plato's conclusion was that matter and form are absolutely distinct and separated from each other. Aristotle, rejecting this conception, formulates one as follows: he says that matter and form are never separated from each other, that there can be no pure form without matter, nor matter without form. In short, the form is always embedded in the matter of the particular object which represents it. This table con-

sists of its matter, wood, and the form of table, which it expresses. We must not consider at this point that Aristotle denies the actual, valid existence of form. The only difference between him and Plato is that whereas Plato separates the Idea entirely from matter, or form from the particular object, Aristotle believes that although the form furnishes the essence to the matter, at the same time it cannot exist without it. Thus Aristotle rejects the Platonic idea of two worlds and insists that there is only one realm of existence, the world of empirical experience, this world of nature. True enough, this world embodies the Platonic world of Ideas, but there is no other distinct idealistic region of reality.

Aristotle is not satisfied, however, with the initial statement that matter and form co-exist in every object in the universe. He goes further. He says that every object has two forms, one the potential form, the other the actual form. The potential form always strives to be actualized. The moment it reaches the actualized form, it again acquires a potential form for something that may become even more actual in the future. In this way the entire universe is in a process of development in which each potential form attempts to realize itself, and the goal of it all is God, who is the only exception to this scheme of things, because God alone is pure form. To illustrate, the child possesses two forms, one is the actual form of child, already realized in its life, and the other is the potential form of the adult, which the child strives to realize in the future. The reason why all this evolutionary striving goes on is because all natural things want to become purified and approach as closely as possible their ideal, God, pure form.

*Four Causes.* Aristotle finally proceeds to explain his notion of the four causes. He says that every object in the world is a result of four contributing elements. In the first place, there is the matter out of which the object is fashioned. This is known as the material cause. Then again, the matter must be fashioned after a certain form. That is the formal cause. Thirdly, there must be motion or energy of some

kind employed in order to produce the object. That is known as the efficient cause. Fourthly and lastly, there must be a purpose or an end in view which the particular object is meant to serve. That furnishes the final cause. The efficient cause in turn may be a result of human intelligence, consciously applying energy to produce the object; it may be a result of a force of nature, or it may be a matter of chance. The Aristotelian conception of a final cause permeating the world gives his entire philosophy an extremely teleological character. In this he is entirely in accord with Plato.

*God.* It will be recalled at this point that the Aristotelian notion of potential and actual form explained the progressive development of the entire universe and its striving to actualize and realize its potentialities. Whither is the universe striving? What is its goal? What is the final purpose of the entire evolutionary process? Before answering these questions we must understand that all the development, all the realization of actual forms, is supplied by the efficient cause, or, in the last analysis, by motion. Therefore these queries may be answered by identifying the source of the motion of the universe. Who, then, supplies this energy? The answer given by Aristotle is God. God is pure form, God is the ideal towards which the whole world is moving, God actuates the universe to strive for fulfillment and realization. Thus it can be seen that the notion of God occupies a very important position in Aristotelian metaphysics. What is the nature of this God? What is the conception which one can form of this Aristotelian theory of a divine being who draws the whole world to himself? He is a God who is distinct and separated from the world of nature. He is called the "Unmoved Mover" by Aristotle. While God himself does not move, while he leads a life of contemplation, a life of leisure, the whole world nevertheless is set in motion by him. A concrete illustration of this conception of God is that of a magnet, the magnet attracts other objects to it while it itself is stationary. The idea of God as the "Unmoved Mover" but nevertheless causing the entire world to be stirred up to

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activity, directs our attention to a study of that Aristotelian science which is exclusively occupied with matter and motion—Aristotelian physics.

### 5. *Physics.*

Here it is not very important to dwell upon his distinction between perfect and imperfect motion. He believes that circular motion is perfect because it is the type of energy imparted to those heavenly spheres which are nearest to God, and linear motion is imperfect because it is farther away from God's direct influence. Furthermore, his discussion of the heart as being the common sense, namely the sense to which all the emotions, all the sensations from the various sensory nerves, are directed, as a result of which we find a unity of perception in the midst of the apparent diversity, may also be passed by without further consideration. The chief emphasis that one should place upon Aristotelian physics, however, is upon his conception of the composition of the soul. The soul, he says, consists of three parts: reason, sensation and vegetation. Reason occupies the same eminent position as in Platonic philosophy. Sensation is that element of the soul which senses, which feels, which has emotions. Finally, vegetation is similar to what Plato calls the appetites, the lowest element in the soul, which requires the greatest attention for moderation and limitation. This psychological conception of the soul is very necessary for us to digest in order to understand thoroughly the essence of Aristotelian ethics.

### 6. *Ethics.*

In Aristotle, as in Plato, politics is an integral part of ethics and the two must be treated together. Man, being a social animal, cannot possibly develop except in a state. Aristotelian ethics differs from Plato's in the fact that it is much more practical and much more applicable to one's daily life. What is the goal of human life? asks Aristotle. The short answer is happiness. What then is happiness? Here Aristotle especially emphasizes the fact that happiness is not to be

identified with honor, pleasure, social position, wealth, because happiness must be an end in itself and not a means to an end, whereas all of these are simply a means to an end. The question of happiness resolves itself into the question, What is the end or goal of life?

As we have seen in the discussion of Aristotle's metaphysics, every object has a final cause, a purpose which it must serve. Its value is then judged in relation to the manner in which it serves this purpose. For example, if a knife is used for cutting, if it fulfills the purpose well, if it cuts well, it is a good knife; otherwise, it is an imperfect instrument. In the same way, in order to discover what is the true end of human life one must find what is the peculiar purpose which human life must fulfill in the world of nature. In order to understand this, one must again have recourse to an analysis of the composition of the human soul. In Aristotle's physics we have seen that the soul consists of three parts. Aristotle here attempts to show that there is only one part of the soul, which is peculiarly human, and that is the rational element. He says, as far as vegetation is concerned, plants and other animals possess it in common with us. Therefore it cannot possibly be a characteristic of human nature as such. On the other hand, sensation, too, humans and other lower animals possess alike. This cannot then possibly be the chief distinction between human and other animals. But the rational element of the soul, we can boast as our exclusive property. Hence, that element is the real distinguishing feature which marks the line of demarcation between the human organism and lower forms of life. Such being the case, the first solution of the problem of happiness is to lead a life of reason, for such a life fulfills the peculiar function of human striving; it is the end or purpose of human desire.

Thus far it appears that Aristotle's ethics is similar to the moral theory of Plato. But as we examine it further we find that there is a vast difference between these two philosophies of life. Aristotle realizes that merely to advocate a life of reason is too abstract, resulting in very little good to the

ordinary human being. To help us achieve this goal, he analyzes this life into goodness of intellect and goodness of character.

Goodness of intellect, in turn, is divided into theoretical wisdom and practical wisdom. Theoretical wisdom apprehends the eternal laws of the universe. There is no direct relation in this knowledge to human conduct. Practical wisdom, on the other hand, is identical with the science of human life; it supplies the right rules of conduct. Goodness of character is the application of these moral principles to one's daily life. It is clearly seen that goodness of intellect is acquired by study, while goodness of character can be developed only by discipline.

But how can one as a practical matter acquire a good character? It is relatively easy to study and learn moral precepts, but the crux of ethics is their application to life. Aristotle faces this problem squarely. He says character, either good or bad, is produced by habituation. It is a result of the repeated performing of acts which have a similar or common quality. This process is naturally one of assimilation, largely imitation by the child of the acts of the adults around him. The result is the development of habits in the individual. But these habitual acts do not acquire moral significance until such time as the agent voluntarily and of his own free choice performs them, until he can act rationally.

*Doctrine of the Mean.* How are we to know what is an act of reason? After all, life is very complex and it is impossible when confronted with many situations, to waste too much time solving this problem of rationality in each case. This would render us slow and ineffective in life. For this purpose, Aristotle supplies us with a very forceful weapon, the "Doctrine of the mean." As a general rule, he says, the right act is the one which conforms to reason. As a practical matter one knows that he is acting in accordance with reason, when he acts in accordance with the mean. Whatever situation confronts us, there are two extremes, which we must avoid, else we shall be acting irrationally. On the other

hand, if we select the middle course, then we are surely on the right track. This doctrine of the mean is illustrated in many ways: consider courage. In a situation of danger one extreme is to run away from it unthinkingly. That is cowardice. On the other hand, one may rush boldly into it, disregarding all the vital circumstances. That is foolhardiness. But a rational man, a man who acts in accordance with virtue, a man who acts in accordance with reason, or the mean, is one who stops and considers the consequences that may follow either in avoiding the danger or in facing it boldly. That is true courage. The same reasoning may be applied in the case of the expenditure of money. The extremes here are prodigality and stinginess; the latter invariably applies to those who are over-careful about wealth, while the former relates to those who uncontrollably spend for the gratification of their passions. The mean here, however, is liberality; the liberal man knows "right giving"; he gives from a motive of honor, in accordance with rational principles. Aristotle particularly stresses the characteristics of the Great-minded man, who stands between the Small-minded and the vain man. It has often been remarked that in describing him, Aristotle really is referring to himself. What then, are his outstanding qualities? "Well then, he is thought to be Great-minded who values himself highly and at the same time justly. . . . The Great-minded man is then, as far as greatness is concerned, at the summit, but in respect of propriety he is in the mean, because he estimates himself at his real value. . . . So the Great-minded man bears himself as he ought in respect of honor and dishonor. . . . It seems too that pieces of good fortune contribute to form this character of Great-mindedness; I mean, the nobly born, or men of influence, or the wealthy, are considered to be entitled to honor . . . He is not a man to incur little risks, nor does he court danger, because there are but few things he has a value for; but he will incur great dangers, and when he does venture he is prodigal of his life as knowing that there are terms on which it is not worth his while to live. He is the sort of man



to do kindnesses, but he is ashamed to receive them. . . . Neither is his admiration easily excited, because nothing is great in his eyes; . . . nor does he talk of other men. . . . Also slow motion, deep-toned voice, and deliberate style of speech, are thought to be characteristic of the Great-minded man."<sup>1</sup>

Aristotle concludes that every mean is a virtue because it is an act of reason; hence, suitable to the nature of the human being. Such "means" are states of mind of the agent, not passions or emotions. It follows that the agent or actor is responsible for all voluntary acts in his daily life; only two factors may possibly do away with moral blame, coercion and ignorance of relevant circumstances, which render the act involuntary and exempt the doer from responsibility.

To return then to the original question: What is happiness? Happiness consists in living a life of reason, in acting in accordance with the mean; in short, it is an activity involving the most excellent part of human nature. This type of happiness can be attained by everybody. It does not depend upon any external circumstances. It is not based on wealth, leisure or on any other factor which is not within the reach of all humans. But Aristotle reserves the highest part of happiness for only a select few. That type of happiness consists of a life of contemplation, a life of contemplation similar to that led by God. This life in which the subject is absorbed in theoretical study, not for practical gain, necessarily involves a great deal of leisure. For that, external possessions become vital and only the few who are so favored by fortune can enjoy it.

To achieve both or either of these kinds of happiness, Aristotle points out that life in a state is the primary requisite. This leads him to evolve a theory of politics.

### 7. *Politics*.

Aristotle points out three stages in the development of the state. First comes the family, then the village community,

<sup>1</sup> "The Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle," Book IV. (Translation by D. P. Chase).

then the state. He shows that "out of the relation between men and women . . . the first thing to arise is the family." The family is an association established by nature for the supply of man's everyday wants, and the members of it are called "companions of the cupboard" or "companions of the manger." But when several families are united and the association aims at something more than the supply of daily needs the next type to be formed is the village. When several villages are united into a complete community, large enough to be nearly quite self-sufficing, the state comes into existence and continues for the sake of a good life.

The state is a creation of nature, and man is by nature a political animal. The state is prior to the family and to the individual, as the whole is prior to the parts. Aristotle adduces as proof of this contention the fact that the individual, when isolated, is not self-sufficing. Therefore, he is like a part in relation to the whole. Aristotle differs from Plato in regard to communism. Plato advocated the common ownership of property; Aristotle is firmly against it. He says the beginning of reform is not so much to equalize property as to train the nobler soul not to desire more, to prevent the lower soul from getting more. He must be kept down but not ill treated. He also differs from Plato in reference to slavery. Plato eliminated all forms of slavery in his ideal state, while Aristotle believes that slavery is a natural condition in a state, and especially in one which supplies the wherewithal for leading a leisurely life, which cultivates a class who want to lead a life of contemplation. We must in all fairness to Aristotle state that the slavery he advocates is not the barbarous type which was prevalent in parts of the South, but very humane and considerate; the slaves were really to occupy the position of menial servants.

To return then to the relation between the state and the ethical development of the individual. The best form of state must be one which not only provides for the existence of a leisure class, but it must also make possible all the conditions necessary for leading a good, just and noble life for all its citizens. The conclusion, therefore, is evident.

Those governments which have regard for these common interests function in accordance with strict principles of justice and represent true forms, but those which regard only the interests of the rulers are defective, they are despotic. The genuine state is a "community of freemen."

The most ideal state is the monarchy; next is the aristocracy, and then comes the constitutional government. The counterpart of each of these in the perverted forms of government are: of monarchy, tyranny; of aristocracy, oligarchy; of constitutional government, democracy. That form of government in which one rules is known as a kingship, royalty, or monarchy. That in which more than one, but not many, rule, aristocracy, so called because the rulers have at heart the best interests of the state and of the citizens. When the citizens at large administer the state for the common interest, it is called then a constitutional government. As a practical man, Aristotle realizes that it is very difficult to find one man who so excels all his fellow citizens in justice and virtue to whom we may with impunity entrust the reins of power; he also realizes that it is equally rare to find several such individuals of excellent character. He therefore suggests as a compromise that the best kind of state for practical purposes, is the constitutional government, in which the majority of the people control. In this, again, Aristotle simply selects the mean between two extremes. In every state there are three elements to be considered. One class is very wealthy, another very poor and a third is a mean between the two. The mean is represented by the constitutional government. In such a state the middle class, which is the governing class, is least likely to shrink from rule or to be over-ambitious for it, both of which are injurious to the state. The majority also are less likely to commit fatal blunders.

Since the state is a community of families for the purpose of a self-sufficing life, it can only be established among those who live in the same place and intermarry, continues Aristotle. This is the principal reason why he advocates a so-called city-state, having approximately a population of 100,000. All

education in the state must be under public control, it must be universal and compulsory. That is necessary in order that the community may instruct future citizens in a way which will make them most loyal to the end the state is designed to further. To be sure, it is necessary that some useful subjects be taught, reading and writing for example, but he emphasizes especially the fact that the state must aim to provide a liberal education, because so-called mechanical subjects make one a slave in body and soul, and not a "free man." Those who insist that a university education ought not to include specialization in purely professional subjects are really in accord with this theory of Aristotle.

#### 8. *Fine Arts.*

Aristotle agrees with Plato that music is one of the ways in which character is moulded, that all art has a direct influence upon character. There is a vast difference, however, between the two theories. Plato, in the Republic, proposed to exclude unduly exciting forms of music from life altogether because they had a tendency to foster a morbid character in those who enjoyed them. Plato for a similar reason wanted to suppress certain types of drama which may have a like influence on character. Aristotle, on the other hand, feels that exciting or sensational art may be very useful as an outlet for one's pent-up energies. He believes that even the most sensational and the most exciting of arts, tragedy, for example, has a purgative value. "We assume," he says, "that, for the finest form of Tragedy, the Plot must be not simple but complex; and further, that it must imitate actions arousing fear and pity, since that is the distinctive function of this kind of imitation. It follows, therefore, that there are three forms of Plot to be avoided. (1) A good man must not be seen passing from happiness to misery, or (2) a bad man from misery to happiness. The first situation is not fear-inspiring or piteous, but simply odious to us. The second is the most untragic that can be; it has no one of the requisites of Tragedy; it does not appeal either to the human feeling in us, or to our pity, or

to our fears. Nor, on the other hand, should (3) an extremely bad man be seen falling from happiness into misery. Such a story may arouse the human feeling in us, but it will not move us to either pity or fear; pity is occasioned by undeserved misfortune, and fear by that of one like ourselves; so that there will be nothing either piteous or fear-inspiring in the situation. There remains, then, the intermediate kind of personage, a man not preëminently virtuous and just, whose misfortune, however, is brought upon him not by vice and depravity but by some error of judgment." We can thus see that the type of plot which appealed to him most was one in which melodramatic horror predominated.

Whatever one may think of Aristotle's treatment of the fine arts, there is absolutely no doubt that his treatment of this subject is by no means as profound as that of the theoretical sciences, especially metaphysics and physics.

### 9. *Conclusion.*

To sum up then: Aristotle's state is an organic necessity for the development of the ethical individual; just as the bee cannot exist but in a social environment, so the human must express his social instinct in gregarious life. This is the biological theory of the origin of the state as contrasted with the contract conception of Spinoza, Locke, Hobbes and Rousseau. From this standpoint, the purpose of the Aristotelian state becomes very clear indeed. It is the condition for the development of the "best life" of its members—such a life must of necessity give happiness. True enough, the average citizen can only enjoy the lesser happiness—a life of rational behavior. The extremely happy life is reserved for a select few, who are blessed with the material goods of fortune. The ideal state will necessarily provide for both of these requirements. In short, Aristotle clearly conceives of the social organization as one which furnishes the opportunity for every worthy member to lead a well-ordered existence. For example, a good citizen must be one who, if he undertakes to serve the government, will not be subject to bribery; he will not be deterred

by promises of reward from sponsoring the right kind of legislation. Aristotle would not condemn such a person if he misbehaves in some other respect; if, for instance, he is somewhat intemperate, as long as he fulfills the main purpose of his existence well. That is a life of reason. Although it is not to be identified with pleasure, yet, the mere fact that one does subordinate his less admirable traits to the rational part of his make-up, which differentiates him from the beast, will in the long run yield the greatest enjoyment. In this respect, pleasure becomes a very necessary element in the "good life."

*Comparison with Plato.* No account of Aristotelian philosophy can be complete unless it is supplemented by some comparison with that of Plato. Both deal with a variety of subjects, materialism, ethics, politics, logic, psychology, God, nature. Both are rationalistic, admitting of a non-empirical element in knowledge; both are idealistic, both are teleological, believing as an integral part of their constructive systems of philosophy that the world exhibits a purpose. Both introduce a new note into the Greek conception of religion, politics, ethics and art, as will be seen later. There are vast differences, however, in their philosophies.

*Metaphysics.* Plato's conception of two worlds distinct and separate is very difficult to digest. Why should one renounce that realm of existence in which all his interests are centered, in which all that is worth while may be developed and cultivated, in favor of a world of ideals? True enough, ideals are very essential, they introduce a certain zest in practical life, a life spent moulding one's daily existence in accordance with the demands of one's ideals, but once such contrast between ideal and actual is admittedly removed by discarding the world of nature, the ideal becomes meaningless. The practical difficulty also remains. Why the need for such a world of experience since its existence simply confuses and blinds one to the essential reality behind it? Plato's attempted explanation that love wants to express itself is not convincing. Could not love find a better means of self-realization than such a distorted world of nature? Is it not

more practical and more in accordance with the facts to believe with Aristotle that there is only this world before us? Is it not a more fitting and proper task for the human being with his intellect and his general superiority over other creatures of existence to face boldly the facts before him, in spite of their apparent confusion, than to run away from them in the Platonic sense? Of course it is more agreeable to turn away from unpleasantness than to be obliged to introduce some harmony in the confusion all around us. But certainly, whoever succeeds in this task, and in addition derives pleasure out of doing it, deserves our heartiest commendation. There is no doubt, therefore, that Aristotle's metaphysics is more practical, more in accordance with the needs of ordinary humans, than that of Plato. Plato's other-worldliness may be proper for mystics, but it is not conducive to the bringing forth of heroes, reformers and others who make the world progress.

*God.* What is Plato's genuine belief about God? Some feel that the Idea of the Good is what Plato means by God—an impersonal principle permeating the world, explaining the purpose, the good and the significance it embodies. If this is Plato's real belief, for practical or religious purposes it has little significance. Even if the personal God represented in the *Timaeus* is the true Platonic conception, again it is not a very imposing doctrine. God is too crude, too helpless, too much at war with matter, too much the artificer, to be a great influence in the ordinary man's thoughts and acts. It is true that William James has a somewhat similar theory of God, but then James' other statements concerning God in particular and religious and ethical doctrines in general are open to some question, refreshing as they may be to read. Aristotle, on the other hand, furnishes the kind of God more in accordance with our needs. Admittedly, he does not clothe his Lord of the world with religious habiliments, yet He is a personal Being distinct from the world, He leads a life of contemplation, He sets the whole world in motion. He is the acme of perfection, pure form. Needless to state,

Aristotle's God is not the last word as to what He should really represent, but it is a step in the right direction.

*Soul.* Both have a similar conception as to the constitution of the human soul—to both it consists of three parts, with reason uppermost. They differ in the belief of immortality. To Plato, immortality is the *sine qua non*—the indispensable condition for his world of Ideas, for only through the Soul can we behold the Idea; that requires that it be constituted of the same eternal stuff as the universals. Aristotle, on the other hand, divides the rational part of the soul into passive and active intelligence; the passive is a recipient of experiences in the world, it shares the same fate as the other and lower elements of the soul; only the active intelligence is eternal. That is the element of the mind which leads the life of contemplation, similar to that of God. The soul as a whole is the form of the body, and since matter and form must always exist together, once the body or its matter is gone the soul also perishes.

*Logic.* Although Aristotle initiates his theory of knowledge by scoffing at Plato's conception, yet, as we have already seen, both really assert that the world of experience cannot, and does not, contribute materially to the real theory of knowledge. Plato says sensation merely reminds us of that which the soul has experienced in a previous existence; Aristotle, that it does not enter into the simplest truths of scientific knowledge, which are axiomatic in character. Of course Plato's theory of preëxistence seems fantastic, but it serves to explain the basic principles of science by calling them innate or latent, as well as if you call them axioms, in the Aristotelian sense.

*Ethics.* Both cannot emphasize too strongly the rational life as the best and happy life. Both do not identify this with pleasure, with honor, with wealth, with social position and the like, because it would be entirely too undignified and inappropriate to human existence. On the other hand, Plato eliminates almost all pleasures, except such as satisfy the essential requirements of the body, from his life of reason;



Aristotle, having regard for the practical life of the individual, allows for the inclusion of a great many pleasures with which one can ordinarily dispense. Plato admits that the life of the philosopher is the happiest of all; Aristotle also proposes a life of contemplation as the highest ideal. Here again, Plato's philosopher needs no external goods, no property, no family, in fact such a sacrifice of all earthly possessions is the very essence of his happy life; Aristotle, the practical philosopher, clearly demonstrates that you cannot lead a life of contemplation, a life devoted not to gain but to theoretical study, unless you already have the wherewithal for the maintenance of the body. This is by far the more practical philosophy. Aristotle's conception that such a life, or as he terms it, such an activity in accordance with the most excellent part of the human soul, yields the greatest of pleasures is psychologically true, since what can be more satisfying than to carry on in a way which appeals to us most? Finally, there are similarities and differences in their politics.

*Politics.* Both urge the need for social life as the indispensable condition for the ethical development of the individual. Both, therefore, base the formation of the state on biological grounds; or on the fact that the social instinct in the individual is the groundwork of the social organization so essential for its development. Plato's ideal is the Aristocracy, a government of philosophers, unselfishly devoting themselves to the public good; no slavery, equality of women, community of women and children and other utopian schemes are included. Then of course there are other states in the course of the devolution of the political unit. Plato is not very much interested in the practical achievement of this state. It simply is to serve as a model for practical political units to imitate. Thus we see that even in politics, which is the acme of practical considerations, Plato discards the actual for the ideal, all in conformity with his temperament. Aristotle here especially has his feet firmly planted on the ground. To be sure, he demands that the state serve the common interest and not that of the individual. Then again, he believes

that the ideal state is a Monarchy,—one good king governing unselfishly—similar to the world of nature which is governed by a God. He also realizes that half a loaf is better than none, hence if there are several good men who can serve the state, or an Aristocracy, it would also be ideal, but this Aristocracy is far different from that of Plato; it must exist for the purpose of enabling a few to lead a life of contemplation; it excludes communism of property, equality of women, and the like, because it must conform to a pattern which may become a practical accomplishment. But Aristotle goes even one step further. Realizing that it is very difficult to find a few good rulers, he says that the constitutional government, a government by the middle class, is best under ordinary circumstances, because there is “safety in numbers.” Of course Plato’s theory encounters fewer practical difficulties, because it is remote from life, it is high up in the clouds—you are not obliged to solve many knotty problems of legislation which confront the legislators, and which confound the citizen by their variety and complexity. Plato points out that his philosophers would be obliged to pass only on the most important issues, which are few in number, but in the Aristotelian state, we encounter many of the questions of the modern political unit, How much taxation, how far shall we allow inequality to be carried, to whom shall we give the right to vote, who are to be citizens, and many other such difficulties. But is this a fatal objection? Far better to try to solve these problems than to avoid them. It is certainly more in conformity with our rational natures, and with the adventurous spirit which moves every red-blooded man, to encounter obstacles and overcome them. All in all, Aristotelian philosophy is more practical for the needs of the individual in his daily life, from every angle—metaphysics, ethics, logic, psychology, politics and God.

## CHAPTER V

### RELATION OF PLATO AND ARISTOTLE TO CONTEMPORARY GREEK THOUGHT

#### 1. *Religion.*

BEFORE proceeding to the last part of Ancient philosophy, the Post-Aristotelians, it will be well to explain the reference made previously to the fact that Plato and Aristotle, especially Plato, introduced a new note into Greek thought. What were the Greek conceptions of religion, the state, the individual and art? What, if any, changes were suggested by the last two famous philosophers?

To get a picture of the background of Greek religion let us turn to the analysis which the historian, Henry Thomas Buckle, makes of the influences of the physical environment on religious faith. Contrasting the types of religions which prevailed in India and in Greece he says:

The works of nature, which in India are of startling magnitude, are in Greece far smaller, feebler, and in every way less threatening to man. In the great centre of Asiatic civilization, the energies of the human race are confined, and as it were intimidated, by the surrounding phenomena. Besides the dangers incidental to tropical climates, there are those noble mountains which seem to touch the sky, and from whose sides are discharged mighty rivers which no art can divert from their course, and which no bridge has ever been able to span. There, too, are impassable forests, whole countries lined with interminable jungle, and beyond them, again, dreary and boundless deserts,—all teaching Man his own feebleness, and his inability to cope with natural forces. . . .

But in Greece, the Aspects of Nature are so entirely different, that the very conditions of existence are changed. . . . While in the Asiatic country everything is great and terrible, in the European country everything is small and feeble. . . . Dangers of all kinds were far less numerous than in the tropical civilizations. The climate

was more healthy; earthquakes were less frequent; hurricanes were less disastrous, wild beasts and noxious animals less abundant. . . . The highest mountains in Greece are less than one-third of the Himalaya, so that nowhere do they reach the limit of perpetual snow. . . .

. . . The tendency of the surrounding phenomena was, in India, to inspire fear; in Greece to give confidence. In India Man was intimidated; in Greece he was encouraged. In India obstacles of every sort were so numerous, so alarming, and apparently so inexplicable, that the difficulties of life could only be solved by constantly appealing to the direct agency of supernatural causes. . . . In Greece opposite circumstances were followed by opposite results. In Greece Nature was less dangerous, less intrusive, and less mysterious than in India. In Greece, therefore, the human mind was less appalled, and less superstitious; natural causes began to be studied, physical science first became possible. . . .

. . . The mythology of India, . . . is based upon terror. . . .

. . . In Greece, the causes of fear being less abundant, the expression of terror was less common. . . . The tendency of Asiatic civilization was to widen the distance between men and their deities; the tendency of Greek civilization was to diminish it. . . . The gods of Greece were always represented in forms entirely human. In that country, no artist would have gained attention, if he had presumed to portray them in any other shape. He might make them stronger than men, he might make them more beautiful, but still they must be men. . . .

. . . The Greek gods had not only human forms, but also human attributes, human pursuits, and human tastes. . . . The Greeks generalized their observations upon the human mind, and then applied them to the gods. The coldness of women was figured in Diana; their beauty and sensuality in Venus; their pride in Juno; their accomplishments in Minerva. . . . Neptune was a sailor; Vulcan was a smith; Apollo was sometimes a fiddler, sometimes a poet, sometimes a keeper of oxen. . . .

. . . In Greece we for the first time meet with hero worship, that is, the deification of mortals. . . .

. . . It is thus, that in Greece everything tended to exalt the dignity of man, while in India everything tended to depress it.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>"History of Civilization in England," by Henry Thomas Buckle, Chapter II.

This quotation shows that the Greeks felt very much at home in the world of nature. Because they felt so little dread of the natural forces they established friendly relations with the gods by personifying them. They entertained no doubts that sacrifices and atonements would placate them and evoke their coöperation. As a result of the same influence, they attributed human emotions to the gods. The gods waged battle, they loved and hated, they were jealous; in fact, they were pictured as being actuated by all the admirable as well as undesirable motives of the human. Furthermore, the gods and descendants of the gods were the founders of the state, which shows the close relation between the political and the religious.

What does this discussion of religion show? It proves that the lofty, idealistic character of religion, in our sense of the word, is absent from that of the Greeks; it shows further that once you humanize and personify God, once you attribute to Him that which you yourself possess, although on a magnified scale, once you do not dissociate God from yourself so that you may look up to Him, with the desire to purify your own life, what is the need of conceiving of a God altogether? To justify the lust of war, for example, because Mars sanctions it, is far from expressing adequately the proper function of religion. Religion should be the embodiment of the permanent ideals of life, a criterion by which we should measure what we ought to retain and what we ought to reform. Certainly that need is by no means satisfied by Greek religion. Then again, this religion undermined morality. How can one be condemned for any base passion, since the gods command him to exercise it? Immortality, too, was not especially emphasized. They did believe in some kind of after-life,—shadowy forms ruled over by Plato, but religion demands a more substantial soul, so that it may serve as a basis for the doctrine of retribution. Real immortality is also a prerequisite for the theory of redemption. How then did Plato attempt to change this? First of all Plato wanted monotheism—one God who dictates for all the world—a

permanent ideal working only to realize the good in the world. No longer did He desire, love, hate, have jealousy and possess all other kinds of human qualities, for that derogates from His dignity. This God is far away from the human—the purpose of the world is to display and cultivate only the good He represents. Plato reconstructed religion also in relation to morality. The permanent ideal or the Idea of the Good no longer depends upon the whims of gods; it is the very structure of the world and of humans. Also immortality is especially stressed by Plato in the *Phaedo* to supply the element of permanence in spiritual life, which was so necessary to the Greeks of his time. The same contention may be made for Aristotle's philosophy. He, too, was monotheistic, emphasized immortality, and attempted to make life of permanent value and significance.

## 2. *The State.*

Here again, the Greeks had two types of states before them, neither of which was a success—Sparta and Athens: Sparta an oligarchy, a government by the rich, in which the individual was greatly suppressed; Athens a democracy, a government by the masses of the people, in which each one had unrestrained liberty. Both fell: Sparta, because of too much inequality; Athens, because of too much equality. The institution of private property caused all the difficulties. Also, the Greeks based the state on a foundation of law, which is too impermanent to withstand the ravages of time. Plato, however, wanted to idealize the state, to remedy all the existing defects, particularly to eliminate private possessions. Plato wanted the state to be a permanent organization, based on that which is grounded in human nature and not on changing law, hence the biological theory of the state. He also wanted it to represent the moral ideals—that is what his Aristocracy meant to portray. Aristotle did reflect in his political views more of the existing state of affairs than Plato; he was more practical, he wanted slavery, private ownership and the like, but even here we find a new note. Aristotle

also adopts the biological theory, guaranteeing permanence; he also proposes an ideal state to help the citizens cultivate the best life.

### 3. *The Individual.*

Here Plato and Aristotle concurred largely with the prevalent opinions. The artisan was not held in high esteem. Athletics and music were considered essential to the development of a proper body and a proper mind. To understand the exalted position the Greeks accorded to athletics, we must realize that the goddesses and graces were sponsors for them; all athletic meets were therefore held in the temples. Our philosophers agree with all this; also with the fact that early training should be directed to the development of an harmonious temperament. But the Greeks held women in very low regard; it was the function of the housewife to cook, stay at home, rear children, but to associate with men in their councils was an unheard-of idea. Even courtesans were more respected. In the Republic, Plato advocates equality of women; a woman, he says, may be a philosopher or a soldier, for the difference between the male and female is one of degree and not of kind. He also differed as to the conception of pleasure. Naturally the Greeks were pleasure-loving people; Aristotle practically follows the prevalent opinion and permits the inclusion of all pleasure that is not harmful in his code of an ethical life. Plato, however, allows only necessary pleasures, such as drinking to quench your thirst, eating and other similar functions to keep the body healthy—but he will not dream of going any further. All unnecessary pleasure is dogmatically ruled out.

### 4. *Art.*

Greek art was especially interested in the subject matter and not so much in the treatment. Modern art, on the contrary, is the opposite, the form of expression is much more important than the subject. In Greek life, art like music, was to control emotions, develop harmony. Painting, sculp-

ture and poetry represented the Gods and heroes. The statue of Zeno at Olympia is an example of this. Not only does this art attempt to express character rather than form, but idealized character, such as only gods and heroes possessed. The modern artist is interested primarily in arrangement of color and form, his interest in the subject is secondary. His art is purely subjective, what the artist's moods may be for the moment, those he expresses. Certainly to limit himself to subjects of national life and national religion would appear absurd and extremely unorthodox to the present day "impressionist." There is no doubt that both Plato and Aristotle agreed with these conceptions of art which made it indispensable for the development of character, of harmony; of treating the subject most national in character. But while Aristotle concurs almost entirely with the prevailing view, Plato feels that the type of poetry, music, drama which stir your emotions, are to be rejected. He heartily disapproves of Homer's representation of the gods with their human infirmities as well as virtues. Plato's rejection of art in general is based, as we have already seen, on his metaphysical conception of the Idea, which shows art to be an imitation of an imitation.

This brief resumé<sup>2</sup> of the relation of Plato and Aristotle to contemporary Greek thought shows more than ever how outstanding they were in their philosophical doctrines. To be sure, Aristotle incorporates after a fashion most of the current beliefs, but Plato certainly is far ahead of his times. Even judging his philosophy from our present-day outlook, it is a finished piece of work, but when you evaluate it from the point of view of the immature thought of his day, his undertaking is really colossal. True enough, it contains many defects and a number of elements too remote from life and too idealistic for practical purposes, but in the abstract and as a thing of beauty no other philosopher has as yet equaled Plato. Had philosophy, however, been inter-

<sup>2</sup> This discussion is based in part on "The Greek View of Life," by G. Lowes Dickinson.



ested only in idealistic, impractical theories, the censure often directed towards it as being unnecessary and visionary would be justified indeed. The redeeming feature is that the history of thought shows that philosophy always returns to the solution of real problems confronting us in life, to the explanation of the very essential and indispensable conditions that surround us. It attempts to supply us with a haven, with a port of refuge in this turbulent sea, in which we are tossed about like the most insignificant and fragile bits of driftwood. From this angle we now turn to the last division of Ancient philosophy, the Post-Aristotelians, the Stoics and Epicureans.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE STOICS AND EPICUREANS

#### 1. *Stoics.*

SOCRATES, as we remember, said that "Virtue is Knowledge." This has been interpreted in a twofold manner—the Stoics, virtue for virtue's sake; the Epicureans, virtue as a means to pleasure. The predecessors of the Stoics in the same line of thought were the Cynics, founded by Antisthenes. They said that the only life worth while is one of pure reason, no element of pleasure must enter into it; pain and suffering are the badge of human existence. They did not concern themselves with the development of a comprehensive philosophy to support their doctrine. The Stoics, on the other hand, propounded a real, positive system of thought of which the central theme is to live according to reason.

*Ethics.* Briefly, their philosophy is this: God penetrates the whole of nature, interesting himself very seriously with our affairs. Nature is composed of a living fire like that of which Heracleitus speaks, and it serves as the body of God. Nature is teleological, for God must act according to a plan or purpose. Starting with this theory, the Stoics find it comparatively easy to cultivate a system of ethics. Since God is identified with nature, the first principle of life is to follow nature; obey the law of nature and you obey God. To be more specific, God has given each of us a part of his divine reason by which to guide our conduct; therefore to follow the dictates of reason is really tantamount to following nature. But what does this following reason actually mean in our daily affairs? Epictetus, one of the later Stoics, gives us a hint of the significance of this principle. We must make the right

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use of appearances of things, he says. In nature we have:

1. Things which are beyond our power to control, such as death, disease, earthquakes and the like. Reason dictates that we must resign ourselves to them, not making ourselves miserable by attempting to deflect the course of nature. Such resignation to our fate is the essential characteristic of that philosophy which is summed up by the maxim, "Be Stoical."

2. Then again, there are some things in nature, some appearances of things, which are within our power to control. Here reason bids us to select only those which help its development and reject others which hinder its course. Nothing in the world, says Epictetus, can make one surrender his soul, his will, to the demands of another. Even if the emperor should torture you, he can only have your body, but you must not even then enslave your soul to him, he cannot rob you of your freedom of thought. Again, you must not subject your free mental development, the rational exercise of your will, to the emotions; appetites and desires must be controlled in a way suggested by the Platonic exhortation. 3. Finally, there are still other appearances of things which are within your power, but which have no bearing on the cultivation of reason. Then it is unnecessary to concern yourself with them; be indifferent to them.

This is a brief summary of the Stoic doctrine. It offers a life of contentment, there is no need of ruffling one's composure under any circumstances. It urges you to be resigned, to put your faith in God, to cultivate the highest element of the soul, reason, so that you may be able to follow the governing principles of nature, in short, to follow God. Epictetus delves more specifically into the duties which the Stoics recommend as a part of their moral code. 1. To self: take care of your body, be athletic, be chaste, be temperate. The Stoic here, unlike Plato and Aristotle, does not deride common labor, he considers it sufficiently dignified even for the sage. 2. To God: respect Him, have the right convictions about Him, follow His dictates. 3. To one's neighbor: this includes the duties of social life, more specifically with

regard to the performance of civic duties, to the development of patriotism, to pity, to punishment—in short, the Stoic recommends all such acts and obligations which may improve and better community life.

Zeno (340–265 B.C.), the founder of the Stoics, committed suicide at the age of seventy-five. He felt that since life is to be lived only for the purpose of following, of using reason in conduct, once you feel that your usefulness is over, you may take leave of the world, or as he put it—"the door is always open." This is a very dangerous doctrine, for where will you draw the line between the useful and the useless? It has never been quite clear whether this teaching is general with all Stoics; the preponderance of the evidence is to the contrary. From the foregoing it is clear that the Stoic did not find any romance in the world or in life. He recommended a course of rigorous conduct, righteous living, elimination of as much pleasure as possible, in fact, almost an unnatural life. Lest it be understood that this type of behavior is good because you will be rewarded in a subsequent existence, we must at once state that the Stoic did not believe in immortality of the soul. The most that he said on this matter is that the soul of the sage survives after the death of the body, but even here it perishes ultimately. Aside from any consideration of the validity of this doctrine, there is no doubt that to live rightly as the Stoics propose, without any sanction of a doctrine of retribution, is far more ideal than the theory of Plato, which urges reward and punishment in after-life as the reason for a life of morality.

*Evil.* To sum up then, the Stoic religion is really pantheistic, God and nature are identified. That alone differentiates it from our theistic religion, which separates God from the world. But there is even a vaster difference between them. The ordinary theistic religion conceives of God as one of love, of sympathy, while the Stoic God is one of duty. The only consideration here is to act because duty demands it. There is one very important problem which the Stoics, because of their conception of God, must solve; we refer to the

problem of evil. If God is in nature, and God is perfect, how can we explain imperfection or evil in the world? They attempt to answer it in this manner: evil is necessary to contrast with the good, we need the sour to emphasize the sweet, we need the imperfect to bring out the perfect, just as the artist must have a shadowy background to emphasize the picture in the foreground. Again, they say, only that is evil which we choose to regard as such, in other words, evil is in our thoughts and is not really objective. This appears ridiculous, for why could not the perfect God furnish us with only perfect or pleasant thoughts? Why, in short, could not God give us pleasant dreams instead of nightmares? The Stoics go one step further; they say that what may appear as evil for the individual may really be good when viewed from the standpoint of the universe as a whole. The example of the artist applies equally well here. If you look only at the shadowy background, it means nothing, it is useless, but taken as a whole, the picture represents the proper proportion, the proper contrast, the perfect whole. Lastly, we need evil to fight it, to overcome it, so that we may develop our characters. It really appears that with the exception of the final solution, which deserves some consideration, especially from the pragmatic point of view, all the other attempts to explain evil are evasive and a waste of effort. It is far better to admit its existence and fight it rather than to run away from it, an objection which seems to be similarly directed against Plato's *other-worldliness* and which may be considered almost fatal.

*Conclusion.* This Stoic philosophy is consistent in its emphasis on a particular type of life, it conceives of the human being as a machine able to conform to one principle without deviation. It urges you to stifle your instincts, to suppress your desires, to subjugate your emotions, to cease living, as we understand the word. To show that they considered conformity to one type of conduct as the most essential characteristic in life, we may simply state that to the Stoic, there are no degrees of virtue; you cannot be virtuous in one respect and offend in others, you are either wholly right or wholly wrong.

They do not allow you to digress from the righteous path, even in the smallest degree. A little intemperance, a little unholiness, a little letting down of the bars, will not do at all.

One of the most important outgrowths of the Stoic teaching is the idea that we are all citizens of the world. This of course is clear. Since God gives each of us a part of his divine reason, and since this element must not be subjected to the will of any mortal, even of an emperor, we all surely belong to the world, we are the children of the one God. Epictetus illustrates the relation between God, man and the world by a very beautiful example. He says: "As on a voyage when the vessel has reached a port, if you go out to get water, it is an amusement by the way to pick up a shell-fish or some bulb, but your thoughts ought to be directed to the ship, and you ought to be constantly watching if the captain should call, and then you must throw away all those things, that you may not be bound and pitched into the ship like sheep; so in life also, if there be given to you instead of a little bulb and a shell a wife and child, there will be nothing to prevent (you from taking them). But if the captain should call, run to the ship, and leave all those things without regard to them. But if you are old, do not even go far from the ship, lest when you are called you make default."<sup>1</sup>

## 2. *Epicureans.*

One rarely discusses Stoicism without at the same time contrasting it with Epicureanism, to which we turn our attention next. The Epicureans, as has already been mentioned, said that we need knowledge or virtue not for its own sake, but to use as a means, as an instrument to pleasure. Their predecessors, who advocated pleasure as the aim of life, were the Cyrenaics, founded by Aristippus. They did not distinguish between pleasures of the moment and lasting pleasures, while Epicurus preferred the latter, although he did not condemn the former. Furthermore, Epicurus (341-270 B.C.) developed a complete and all-inclusive phi-

<sup>1</sup> "The Discourses of Epictetus" (The Encheiridion, Section VII).

losophy to support his doctrine of pleasure as the end and goal of human life. When we examine the Epicurean doctrine we find that every branch of its philosophy is concentrated on one issue, namely, to eliminate all fear of punishment in this existence or in a subsequent life, and as a result, therefore, to enjoy ourselves to the utmost. From this angle let us examine Epicurean metaphysics, its conception of God, of the soul, and its ethics.

*Metaphysics.* Epicurus and his successor, Lucretius, the Roman poet, adopt bodily the entire-atomistic theory of Democritus. They introduce two distinctions, however: 1. They argue in accord with scientific theory that all bodies heavy and light, possess the same velocity in a vacuum. But these indestructible particles or atoms move in straight lines and not only downward; once in a while they swerve from the straight path, connect with the others by means of hooks and thus form the universe. 2. The second change is by far the more important for the purpose of ethics, for which the Epicureans are famous—they claim that chance and not mechanical law is responsible for the motion of the atoms. This explains free will and moral responsibility in the world.

*God.* The Epicureans do not affirm absolutely the existence of the gods, but they argue that even if they do exist, they have nothing to do with us or with our world of nature. They are happy beings living in a home of their own; why should they worry over our puny and insignificant troubles? Furthermore, the atoms are infinite in number and space is unlimited; therefore, there may be an infinite number of worlds like ours—how can the gods take care of so many worlds? If you say they cannot, why do you single out only this world for their exclusive concern? Lastly, we come to the most fatal argument of all. The gods are perfect, the world is full of imperfections, how could the gods have created such a world? This is the familiar question of evil, to which the Stoics gave evasive answers, but which the Epicureans admit and do not attempt to explain, because they realize the futility of such an effort. The conclusion reached

as a result of this view of God is to relegate all the beliefs about the gods punishing us with thunderbolts, with plagues and the like to superstition. All such occurrences are natural phenomena.

*Soul.* The soul is mortal because it has a parallel development with the body; when the body is young the mind, too, is immature; in old age, both body and mind are feeble; then again, a blow on the head stuns the mind, thus showing that both are similar in texture. What shows, finally ask the Epicureans, that the soul survives the body? Is there any evidence that the soul escapes from the body at death? Since the soul is mortal, they conclude that there is no fear of punishment after death. In this way, a very fine background is prepared for the final doctrine of Epicurean philosophy—*their ethics*. Why not enjoy a life of pleasure, why not yield to your instincts, desires and emotions? But, say you, how can we enjoy such a life when at every moment the gods may frown upon us, hurl one of their thunderbolts and crush us? Or perhaps, you may argue, continue the Epicureans, even if we escape the wrath of the gods in the world, they have our souls under their control everlastingly in a subsequent existence. You imagine all kinds of tortures in hell; the fear of retribution grips your heart and even while you enjoy the pleasures, you tremble for fear of the consequences. Epicurus scoffs at this frame of mind. The gods are not concerned with us here, hence, there is no fear of punishment while we are alive. There is also nothing to worry about after death, because once we are dead we stay dead. What fly is there in the ointment under such conditions? Have a good time while you may. Of course, Epicurus realizes that there is always a morning after, following the night before. That type of physical pleasure which is temporary, fleeting, very often is accompanied with pain. It is therefore preferable to select, if possible, the mental, permanent pleasures which are pure and entail no disagreeable consequences. This theory of ethics, to derive as much enjoyment as you can out of life, was adopted by Horace, Steven-



son, Herbert Spencer, Walt Whitman and John Stuart Mill. The last, however, is an Epicurean heretic, for he emphasizes the pleasures of others in preference to your own; such a doctrine could not possibly be accepted by the ordinary Epicurean. By way of passing, it is perhaps well to mention that Epicurus and his followers actually practiced what they preached. They formed a colony where men and women lived promiscuously, whose sole ambition in life was to enjoy everything to the utmost. They did not select only lasting and mental pleasures, in fact, the physical predominated.

### 3. *Comparison of Stoicism and Epicureanism.*

What does a comparison between these last two philosophies contribute to a philosophy of the ordinary individual? Metaphysically both Stoic pantheism and Epicurean atomism may be of special significance in our daily life, if interpreted correctly. No one doubts that the atoms play a great rôle in nature; science, experience, vouch for that. On the other hand, who does not prefer to feel that God watches over, and is concerned with, him? Of course Epicurean insistence on chance, conflicts with the mechanical theory of atoms, and Stoic emphasis on necessity to act in accordance with nature, contradicts the theory of moral responsibility so essential in their ethics, but who urges us to adopt both of these theories in every particular? Then again, the Epicurean emphasis on the indifference of the gods to human affairs leaves us out in the cold; there cannot be real comfort in human life, if in moments of great trouble we cannot turn to God with the conviction that he will help us. But the Stoic God is really no better. True enough, he permeates the world and is supposed to take care of us, but does he possess any love or sympathy? Not at all, he is just a metaphysical God necessary to support their metaphysics and their ethics. Concerning the constitution of the soul there is very little difference between them. The real contrast appears in the ethics of each of these schools of thought. On the one hand, we have the Stoic doctrine of a life of reason and

no pleasure; on the other hand, we have the Epicurean insistence on a life of pleasure and very little reason. Each is defective, not taking cognizance of the complexities of human life. How can the ordinary man be expected to eliminate all instincts, emotions and desires and cold-bloodedly devote himself exclusively to a life of virtue for virtue's sake? This Stoic doctrine does not recognize that the human being is not an automaton, he is not a machine. On the face of it, the Stoic paradox that there are no degrees of virtue, that you are either wholly virtuous or wholly vicious, is absurd. The entire scheme of life is based on compromises, on the evaluating of certain obligations, on the selection of certain modes of conduct as against others. Very often a little vice may sweeten virtue; why then condemn the person? But that does not justify us in adopting the Epicurean system of morality. The more pleasure we enjoy, the more we desire; if we become satiated and our appetites are jaded, what else is left in such a life? Each of us possesses appetites and desires, the desires are short-lived, which can always be satisfied. Our appetites, however, are of long duration and can never be satisfied. This results in a despairing of ever achieving a really happy, pleasurable life. In short, each of these theories is by itself not suited to life; the Stoic is too fundamentally rigid, the Epicurean is too shallow. Under the latter, the men will not work, will not pay their obligations, will be a useless and wasteful lot; the women will be no better, flitting about without centering their attention on anything serious in life. The best solution, therefore, is perhaps to have a life in which there will be some rational principles to point the way and also some pleasure to make it less burdensome, offering encouragement in moments of despair. This type of philosophy was most closely approached by Aristotle.

#### 4. *Relation of Stoicism to Brahmanism, Buddhism and Christianity.*

In spite of its unsuitability for practical life, however, Stoicism is entitled to serious consideration, especially be-

cause of its similarity to other great systems of thought, and particularly its relation to Brahmanism, Buddhism and Christianity. Since the dawn of civilization, men have felt that it was unjust to punish or reward anyone simply because chance of circumstances made him act in a certain way. For example, at the very beginning of the development of human society, if a man killed another most accidentally, the tribe exacted his life on the theory that "blood calls for blood"; later, however, the ancient Hebrews provided a place of refuge for such innocent victims of fortune. Ever since, this idea progressed until it became a settled doctrine that reward and punishment must be administered only according to desert. But then human society faced a very knotty problem. What sanction is to be found in nature for such a course? Is it not true that in nature the innocent suffers often? Is it not also a fact that the guilty, the aggressor, usually prevails in the natural realm and escapes all punishment? In short, these different human aggregations were confronted with the same problem; how explain the fact that nature does not follow the theory of justice developed by us humans? The two great Indian philosophies, Brahmanism and Buddhism, attempted to solve it in an almost identical manner, with but slight modifications.

*Brahmanism.* In accord with the opinions that prevailed among the pre-Socratic philosophers, Brahmanism conceived of the universe as composed of an underlying substance, which they called "Brahma"; the individual, too, was made up of this substance stuff called "Atman." The only reason why the individual is separated from the "Brahma" is because he is surrounded by desires, emotions, pleasures, pains, in fact by all that constitutes his phenomenal existence. Every individual has a certain personality, a certain character, known as "karma." Now we get the answer to our original question. Why does nature permit the innocent to suffer? Why does nature exhibit such moral indifference? Because, say the Brahmans, this "Karma" transmigrates, passes through successive existences, modified and influenced by the manner

in which you live in each of your phenomenal existences. Therefore, even if the individual suffers in his present existence, although he may be innocent now, he pays the penalty for having sinned in a previous existence. In any event, the innocent actually does not suffer, which is in accord with the human belief in justice. But how can the individual stop this constant round of transmigration? By renouncing the will to live, by suppressing his desires, by eradicating his very instincts, by asceticism; he must not only yield up all pleasure, but must actually undergo all kinds of pain in order to cure his "Karma." The moment he does this, the phenomenal barrier between the "Atman" and the "Brahma" disappears and the individual is swallowed up in the world of cosmic substance. That ends his suffering for all time.

*Buddhism.* Buddhism is another famous Indian philosophy, founded by Gautama. He denies the existence of any substance, either in the cosmos or in the individual. All we have are sensations, phenomena; everything is "such stuff as dreams are made of." "Karma," however, remains, and is transmitted from one existence to another, similar to the Brahman doctrine. What then is the Buddhistic answer to our puzzling question? Here again, the individual suffers, because the defects in his "Karma" brought about in some other existence, have not yet been cured. The remedy Gautama offers is not self-imposed suffering, not asceticism, for that is crude, useless and often harmful. He suggests controlling your appetites, your passions, your desires, by critically examining their foundation, by cultivating such habits as will oppose them effectively; in short, return good for evil, be humble, renounce the will to self-assertion. Once you accomplish that, you reach complete happiness, because it is complete cessation of the desire to live, complete rest, the end of all dreaming—this goal is "Nirvana."

To return to the Stoics: They too, say "follow nature," but that is the very crux of our problem. If we follow the dictates of nature, how can we justify the type of moral con-

duct we advocate—humility, justice, benevolence and all other similar virtues which have absolutely no foundation in the world of experience? This is the age-old problem of evil. We have seen what evasive replies the Stoics give to this most insoluble puzzle. The Stoics finally in despair must reach practically the same conclusion as the two great systems of Indian philosophy, to resign ourselves to our fate, not to fight that which is beyond our power to control, to believe with blind faith that God knows what he is about; in a word, to cease living.

It may be well to comment at this point that these philosophies may possess great merit because of their imaginative-ness, because of their realization of the difficulties in nature which appear almost insurmountable, because of the pleasant, lethargic feeling they desire to instill in their adherents by the renunciation of the will to live; but is this the type of life we crave? We have already pointed out in Plato that to run away from this world, because of its apparent confusion and utter incomprehensibility, is cowardly. Why not enjoy this unequal struggle, why not derive zest out of the very attempt to conquer as much of your natural environment as is necessary for your development? We must realize that ultimately the cosmic process, the world order, will overcome our feeble struggles, but is that sufficient reason for “lying down on the job?” William James pointed out that when two men play chess, one a novice, the other an expert, the expert will ultimately win, but even he does not know all the moves his opponent will make. We say that the novice, while he makes the moves, can derive much enjoyment out of the game, although he knows that he will lose in the end. To be sure, it is not a foregone conclusion that nature will inevitably vanquish us, for the idealistic metaphysics holds out promise for our final victory. This we shall discuss later.

*Christianity.* What comparison may finally be drawn between Stoicism and Christianity? Briefly we may say that both conceive of God as spirit in nature, both agree that God is not the aloof Being in the Aristotelian sense, nor the in-

different personality in the Epicurean belief. He is very intimately concerned with our affairs. Then again, both emphasize duty and consider it a demand of man's own inner life, based really on conscience. Self-denial or asceticism, contempt for the ephemeral, unimportant things of this world, is evident in these great systems of thought. But this identity is not to be carried too far. The God of the Stoics is an impersonal reason who looks upon nature as a whole, and if the individual's lot is contrary to the whole, he alone suffers. He is not a God of love, of sympathy, to whom you can turn in moments of distress. He is not a God to whom you may pray for forgiveness. This cold-bloodedness, which is an essential characteristic of the Stoic God of duty, is carried to the moral relations between men. Help your neighbor because it is your duty, not because he rouses your sympathy; help him because reason impels you to do so, not because you desire to do so; in short, Stoicism demands that all emotions, all feelings that mellow life be suppressed, and the human become a cold, calculating, logical machine. They caution you not to express sorrow at death, not to console anyone in his bereavement; this may be perfectly proper as a matter of reason, for such happenings are inevitable, but how much does it ease our burden of life? How much more bearable does it make life? We have seen in the *Phaedo*, as Socrates is about to die, after drinking the hemlock, there is an outcry among his disciples, but he coldly frowns upon it and further shows his imperturbability by asking Crito to pay a trivial debt he owes. This is a Stoic procedure, but no amount of argument could persuade us to imitate such behavior under similar circumstances. Christianity naturally does not countenance such principles. God is love; he concerns himself with the individual, each man's fate is within His control. He is the power to whom we appeal in prayer, a personal God who will not always judge too harshly our transgressions, a God who will let duty be replaced by forgiveness, if we repent. It is also true that Christianity regards sympathy and love as great virtues, even in the relations between humans. It recognizes

grief and sorrow at the loss of a loved one; it offers consolation and hope in times of trouble. The Stoics did not require immortality of the soul in a philosophy which was not interested in engendering hope in the human breast for redemption in spite of all past sin, but Christianity is based upon the fact that every soul can be redeemed and it is given an everlasting opportunity to be taken back into the spiritual fold; hence, immortality is essential. Stoicism and Christianity attempted to solve the problem of evil almost in the same way, and both are open to the same objections. This final word, however, may be said, that Stoicism is really an ethics, and Christianity a religion. A religion must appeal to the masses, must offer a practical guide for life, whereas the Stoic ethics offers ideals that are extremely illuminating but not sufficiently satisfying for the ordinary man.

### 5. *Conclusion.*

In conclusion, we find thus far five great philosophies of life represented by Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics, the Epicureans and Christianity. We may graphically illustrate the interrelation of these systems of thought by adopting a Platonic setting for a discussion between the characters promulgating them. Let us suppose a banquet scene; at the head of the speaker's table sits Socrates, calm, imperturbable, rather homely, but radiating peace and intelligence. On his right, sits Plato, the Aristocrat; beyond him, Zeno, the Stoic, a look of resignation on his pain-lined countenance; on the left of Socrates, is Aristotle, the scientific observer, displaying perhaps the courtly manner which he acquired while in the service of Alexander the Great; beyond him, reclines Epicurus, the pleasure-loving individual, already marked with the signs of the care-free man who is not concerned with the serious matters of life. They have all eaten heartily and perhaps have drunk some, for surprising as it may seem, Plato, apparently does not practice what he preaches, as far as his banquet scenes are concerned; Plato always advocates temperance; whereas his characters are often portrayed as drinking

somewhat to excess. A discussion then ensues between these five about life. Socrates, in his customary manner, does not wish to debate on life in its general meaning, for that would lead all of them astray. He therefore pictures a particular individual. This man is described as a citizen of a large country, a parent of two children, a good husband in the ordinary meaning of the term; he enjoys some of the pleasures of life, attends moving pictures, reads some detective fiction; at the same time he is also a member of a church, enjoys philosophy and is a very sympathetic friend in time of need; in short, he is a man of average intelligence and leads the ordinary existence. Shall he be admitted into the inner shrine of the select few? Is he the proper person to be accepted by any one of them as exemplifying the life each advocates? The older members courteously yield the floor to the younger, to Zeno and Epicurus. Zeno rejects him without further question; he is not ascetic enough, he does not lead a life of pure reason, he attends to the world of experience in too large a degree. Epicurus does not want him, because he is a fool to endure the hardships and pain involved in the duties of parenthood, society, religion. Being a member of a church, he believes in God and in His intervention in human affairs; that surely eliminates him from the Epicurean circle. Now Plato speaks up; he says this person is not wholly bad, as a member of the artisan or the producing class; but as a member of the select circle, he cannot hear of it. His life includes unnecessary pleasures, he does not subordinate his finite existence to the infinite, the Idea. He prefers to be a husband, a father, to interest himself in the daily life of experience, and removes himself from the life of pure philosophic contemplation. How can he, asks Plato, admit to his society, a man who combines philosophy with detective fiction? Aristotle frowns a great deal at all of these answers. In his eagerness not to be accused of such thoughts as the others have expressed, he interrupts Plato's speech. He says that as long as he lives a well-ordered life, as long as he fulfills the plan or purpose that he sets out before him, what does



it matter if some of the other elements in his life are not quite up to the standard? He emphasizes the need of a plan, of a goal, in everyone's life. But Aristotle, too, finds a fatal objection to this particular individual. He has been raised in too large a social group, he should have developed in a city-state. Also, Aristotle feels that since this individual has no external possessions, he cannot lead a life of contemplation; he therefore is not entitled to the highest consideration. If he is a worker or a producer, Aristotle cannot possibly associate with him, in spite of the fact that he leads a properly guided and rationally directed existence, acting always moderately, or according to the mean. Just when it seems that this individual under discussion is to be wholly barred, in walks a patriarch, with an extremely benevolent air. He overheard the last part of the conversation, and he offers to admit him to his inner group. He says no other test applies to anyone except the guide offered by love. Love bridges all gaps, overlooks many defects, takes to its bosom all individuals, artisans, slaves, members of small and large communities. Love renders pleasure more pleasurable, it makes a life of reason more mellow and it offers encouragement to continue with it; love does not sacrifice the finite to the infinite, it does not sacrifice the husbands and wives in this world to some conception of an ideal in a previous existence. To be sure, he continues, Christianity, based on love, does emphasize the suppression to some extent of the lower elements in the soul to the higher, it recommends a life of self-denial, yet it countenances many other desirable things that may be included in it, such things as are found in the average man's life. This patriarch then explains that he agrees with the last speaker that one needs to formulate a plan for one's life, that then some small transgressions may be overlooked. He protests vigorously, however, against excluding members of large states, for all men of the world are children of God; he does not bar those without external goods, although he admits that you can do more for your fellow men if you have the means.

The others are at first shocked by the patriarch's words, but gradually their manner changes and soon there is a general hand-shaking around the table and hearty approbation of his pronouncements. Thus the banquet ends.



**BOOK II**  
**MODERN PHILOSOPHY**



## CHAPTER I

### SCHOLASTICISM. THE INTERVENING PERIOD BETWEEN ANCIENT AND MODERN PHILOSOPHY

SCHOLASTICISM is the philosophy of the Middle or Dark Ages; it was meant to support the doctrines and canons of the Church. The Scholastics were extremely dogmatic, basing all their beliefs, criticisms and principles on faith and revelation. They felt, however, that if this could be bolstered up with reason, no matter how specious it might be, their position would be unassailable. This resulted in the type of philosophy which has retarded real, enlightened progressive thought many centuries. When the illuminating rays of truth finally penetrated this medieval darkness there was such a reaction, beginning with the Renaissance, that we are still thinking and acting under its influences.

Is it not paradoxical to formulate a philosophy to serve as the handmaid to faith, when by its very definition philosophy is the product of rational, independent thinking? What was the cause for this change in emphasis placed on the human's endowments—from reason to faith? In the Greek period, reason was extolled, it was the pivot around which all other interests centered. Now it has been deposed and its position usurped by blind faith, answerable to no one, except perhaps to God, who, by very definition is the Unknown, and, therefore, in the Baconian conception, not the subject matter of philosophy. Needless to say, this change was not abrupt. Other things being equal, evolutionary progress is gradual and continuous. Saltatory evolution, even if it does contribute substantially to the progress of the world, is the exception rather than the rule. The human, subject to this law

of development, should not be considered as undergoing abrupt transformations from one type to another. The same reasoning must apply to the human mind. In fact, this consideration led Comte to develop the conception of the three stages—the theological, metaphysical and positive—through which the mind passes in order to reach the level of complex thinking that is such a vital factor in modern scientific and social activity.

What then was the system of thought linking the Greek enthusiastic acceptance of reason as the ultimate arbiter with the Scholastic notion of the supremacy of faith? The key is supplied by the religious, mystical philosophy of Neo-Platonism represented by Plotinus (204–269 A.D.).

### 1. *Neo-Platonism.*

We have seen the distinct line of demarcation Plato draws between the Ideal and the actual, between the spirit and the flesh, between God and the world. This type of philosophy lends itself readily to a religious interpretation. Such dualism supplies the very breath so vital to dogmatic faith. Plotinus, no doubt discouraged by the bleak picture of life, of nature, if it is viewed from the intellectual aspect alone, desired to infuse some warmth, some emotional satisfaction into the world. He adopted the Platonic doctrine in a general way, but gave it a slightly different twist. More specifically he conceived of God as the One, ineffable principle in the world. You cannot define him, you cannot know him intellectually. You cannot reach him by dialectic. There is only one successful ladder by which to ascend to him—by a direct union with Him intuitively. We must prepare ourselves in different ways for this immediate experience—by certain abstinences, by purification ceremonies, by running away from the world, by prayer, by self-denial. The mystical experience in which we unite with the One is most enjoyable, and it furnishes us with a potent antidote to despair and to discouragement.

This, however, is only part of the picture Plotinus presents

of the world. He furnishes us with the theory of creation as emanation. The universe emanates from the One or God, as light emanates from the sun. Intelligence is the first direct emanation; it is therefore the highest form of existence. The soul emanates from the Intelligence and is thus removed one step further from the Divine. Finally we have the body as the final emergence. Beyond body there is matter, or what he calls non-being. Matter has infinite potentialities on which God can exercise His creative productivity.

This brief survey of Neo-Platonism serves to show how reason as an instrument of life has been greatly weakened. It does not enable us to unite with God, or approach God; in fact, this highest goal is to be achieved by an ineffable experience. The One, too, is indescribable and must be postulated as the *raison-d'être* of the Universe. Does not this shift the emphasis from reason to faith? Such extolling of faith makes it relatively easy to understand why the Church of the Scholastic type could entrench itself in a position of power from which it has not completely been displaced even to this day.

## 2. *Problems of Scholasticism. Faith and Reason.*

Scholasticism began by extolling faith. While reason could not be denied entirely, its function was simply to confirm dogma. The moment there was a conflict, faith emerged triumphant. St. Augustine, although not strictly a Scholastic, nevertheless as early as the fifth century showed the trend of this belief, in his famous statement *Credo ut intelligam*—"I believe in order that I may understand"—or faith is superior to reason. This conception marks Scholastic development at its peak. But such a situation could not last long. Later we find the doctrine of the twofold truth, according to this, reason and faith occupy positions of equality. When you engage in theological thought, faith necessarily is the guiding principle; on the other hand, in all scientific and secular activities, reason is the only principle to follow. The artificiality of such a theory shows its weakness. As a result,



in the final stages of Scholasticism, reason was considered a superior to faith. That surely sounded the death-knell of this type of thought.

Barren as Scholasticism may appear to the casual student, it nevertheless embraces a great many doctrines worth mentioning, especially because of their connection with modern philosophic reasoning. It deals with certain problems which are of interest to students of philosophy—the problems of Nominalism and Realism, Freedom of the Will, and Evil.

*Nominalism and Realism.* Plato's conception of the Idea as a really existing thing, even more permanently and essentially existing than the particular, influenced the Scholastics to be Realists. As such they were able to present the doctrine of the Universal Mother Church as actually existing—thus validating the foundation of religion. It is clear that if the Universal in theology is more permanent, and possesses greater essence than the secular or particular factors in life a philosophy supporting such belief assumes great dignity and is to be placed on a high pedestal. Conversely, i. e. the Universal, the Ideal, is only a name, a term by which to describe the innumerable details and complexities of the world, then the very props are forced out from under religion. It is perfectly proper for loving couples to desire to be married in the "Little Church Around the Corner" but unless such church is an expression of some unchangeable eternal institution, behind appearances, what is left for Scholasticism to defend? Such considerations led practically all Scholastics to be Realists. The moment nominalism made its appearance Scholasticism was doomed. One of the last Scholastics, William of Occam, taught such nominalism.

*Freedom.* Are we free, may we choose between alternatives voluntarily, or are our actions predetermined by a Divine Being? What does it matter, you ask? Upon the solution of this question depends our theory of moral responsibility. How can one be punished for his sins, if he has no choice in his conduct? Strict determinism is frank

about this matter. It holds that we humans are tossed about in the universe like atoms subject to laws of mechanism. Materialism, however, need not furnish any answer to the query why a Divine, merciful father should punish us, when no blame ought to attach to our actions. It holds simply that we suffer, because the world is governed by universal laws which apply to us, the same as to other objects. Religion, however, cannot adopt this attitude. It must allow for moral responsibility based on freedom of choice.

\* It follows, therefore, that the Scholastics predicated free will. But do they consider the will as acting capriciously, or is it subject to some other part of our make-up? The answer to this furnished the bone of contention between Duns Scotus and Thomas Aquinas. Scotus said that God created the world by caprice, that is the very essence of free will. We, His creatures, also possess such unrestrained freedom. Aquinas does not concede such capricious activity even to God. To him God's Will is subject to his intellect, which does not deny freedom, but simply modifies it. Since God is controlled by his own intellect, he is not constrained to do anything, he is not compelled to act from without, but by his own nature. The same holds true for us.

*Evil.* This problem is the Waterloo of all religions. The Epicurean argument applies with as much force now as in the days of Epicurus. If God, a perfect being, created the world, how explain the imperfections, the suffering in the universe? The Stoics answered the question in various ways, all of which were evasive and made no impression upon the intelligent mind. The Scholastics, likewise, struggle futilely with this unanswerable question and reach equally barren results. Would it not be better to face the facts squarely, admit the existence of evil, and devote all our efforts to its amelioration, rather than waste our energy in explaining away something which obviously cannot be so treated? Even if we are religious fanatics, such a procedure is not tainted with heresy. For who are we, mere humans, to attempt to understand all the ways of God?

### 3. *Famous Scholastics.*

St. Anselm. (1033–1109.) Among the Scholastics there are some figures who deserve special mention. St. Anselm is the originator of the famous ontological argument for the existence of God, which was later adopted by Descartes. The argument is very simple. Each of us has an idea of a supremely perfect being, or of a God. Perfection implies existence, for a being with the added element of existence is more perfect than one who is only an idea. Therefore God exists. But we object, just as Aquinas does, that such an idea of God cannot prove his actual existence, because the id does not show that there is an objective reality corresponding to it.

Abelard. (1079–1142.) Abelard, another Scholastic, is particularly noted for his theory of conceptualism. We have shown before what a vital factor to this philosophy of the Middle Ages was the belief either in Realism or in Nominalism. Abelard takes the middle course. He says universals are neither existing realities nor are they mere names—they are concepts by which particulars are designated and classified. This is similar to the commonly accepted opinion as to the nature of abstract ideas at the present time.

Thomas Aquinas. (1225–1274.) The most outstanding character in this period, however, is Thomas Aquinas. him may be directly traced all the influences of Aristotle. . adopted the theory of the Aristotelian four causes, potentia and actual forms, classification of the sciences, and the dual between God and the world, although at this point we note that Aquinas clothes God with religious habiliments . contrasted with the aloof, intellectual Aristotelian God—the Unmoved Mover. We referred to the rejection by Aquinas of Anselm's ontological proof for the existence of God. I he supplied two other arguments, which he considered very cogent, but which in our opinion are also subject to severe criticism, culminating in their complete annihilation by manual Kant, in his Critique of Pure Reason—we r

the Cosmological Argument and the argument from contingency. The first begins by accepting the obvious fact that there is a cause for everything in the world. We cannot go on *ad infinitum* seeking for preceding causes—hence we must stop at a first cause, itself uncaused. This first cause is God. Without delving into all the difficulties raised by this argument, suffice it to ask, How does Aquinas make the transition for causality prevailing in the world of nature to a Being, who, admittedly, is outside the world? As to the proof from contingency, he says that everything in this world depends upon something else; one physical object, for example, must depend upon another—a house must rest on the ground. Here, too, we must direct attention from the contingent non-necessary existing thing to a necessary independent Being upon whom the whole universe rests. This necessary being is God. The objection leveled against the preceding argument applies with equal force to this proof.

#### 4. *Influence of Plato and Aristotle.*

This résumé of Scholasticism is sufficient to indicate some of its main characteristics. It was influenced by Plato and Aristotle. The latter influence was felt in a great many respects, aside from its effect upon Aquinas. Aristotle's conception of a God, outside of the world, causing all motion in nature, supplying the efficient cause for the universe, was well suited for a philosophy whose primary purpose was to find confirmation for the Church. The fact that Aristotle's God was devoid of all qualities so essential for a religious conception of the Creator offered small difficulty to the theologians, whose minds were very quick to find reasons and explanations even for things most mysterious. Certainly Aristotle was not concerned with attributing mercy, love, sympathy and similar qualities to God, who, he considered, was leading a life of contemplation and supplied purely the metaphysical aid for explaining the efficient cause and the goal for universal progress. The Scholastics described God in the most negative terms. Whether such description was in the nega-

tive or in the affirmative, He was conceived as possessing all that the human mind can imagine, and more. To borrow from Aquinas in this connection: "The highest knowledge which we can have of God in this life, is to know that He is above all that we can think concerning Him." We know God by analogy in attributing to Him all perfections; by negation, in excluding from these perfections all elements of imperfection—he is the transcendent Being, without limitation, he is infinite, pure existence. Aquinas discusses God's simplicity, goodness, immutability, unity, justice and similar attributes. Aquinas concludes, nevertheless, that we must demonstrate the existence of God; the truth of God's being is not immediately evident to us. In connection with this description of God's qualities we should contrast this Scholastic with Herbert Spencer. The latter says that the individual, who considers God so far above his comprehension as to designate Him the Unknown, is by far more religious than the Theist who feels so confident of his ability to describe the Divine, even negatively. Is this not a just criticism of the vanity of the theologian to permit himself even in the slightest degree to be an adequate vehicle through which to express God?

### 5. *Conclusion.*

*Common Characteristics.* In conclusion, we may say that the Scholastics have many characteristics in common. They are dogmatic, desiring to have their doctrines taken at their face value; if reason does not support them, they have recourse to faith. Does not the Spinozistic statement "an asy" of ignorance" characterize this attitude? They are extremely orthodox. Most naturally, those who weave webs of religious dogmas must themselves be thoroughly convinced of the validity of their beliefs.

The Scholastics all advocate moderation. The union of soul and body places man midway between the purely spiritual and the purely material. In their ethics, intellectual happiness does not exclude the reasonable satisfaction of the bod-

—in this way duty and pleasure may go hand in hand. The individual well-being is harmonized with the good of the state. They advocate a sense of proportion in all things—this is a result of Greek influences.

They also supply us with a doctrine of coherence. In the first place, they emphasize the value of personality. The individual is extolled; his happiness, his immortality, his equality with his fellow men are especially emphasized. Then again, God is at the head of the Universe. Man finds Him the sole object worthy of his love and reverence. All interests in life, whether they be social or individual in character, are to be directed towards God as the goal.

All Scholastics are dualistic; God and the world are distinct. The world was created out of nothing, and owes its continued existence to the will of God. A theistic religion must support such a dualistic conception, otherwise, pantheism would be the result. That is so fatal to the Church, that merely entertaining such a thought branded one a heretic and made him a subject for punishment. Bruno, as we shall see shortly, exemplifies this attitude on the part of the medieval church. Then, too, they were all optimistic. God is the author of this world, hence it must embody all possible good. Lastly, Scholasticism considered *being* as static. The world is not undergoing constant change, but is right here and now a complete and perfect creation of a perfect God.

*Metaphysics.* Is there any element in Scholasticism that we may utilize in a philosophy particularly suited for our individual needs? Its metaphysics contains very little to recommend it. At this point, we may perhaps answer the often asked question of many, who are curious to learn what we need of a metaphysics for life? Obviously, metaphysics by the very definition that it is a study of reality, of that which does not appear to our senses, of truth in the absolute sense, cannot be connected with practical life very readily. It is the groundwork, however, of any theory concerning all phases of human behavior. David Hume, whom no one can charge with shutting his eyes to experience

as we understand it, said that metaphysics is necessary for art, morality, religion, economics, sociology; for the abstract sciences, as well as for every branch of human endeavor, considered from the practical angle. It is the foundation upon which one builds his career, consciously or unconsciously; it is the guide, the anchor of the human's interests; upon its truth or falsity depends what type of man you may develop into.

To return then to Scholastic metaphysics. It borrows almost wholly from Aristotle, but with this exception. Aristotle "followed it through" from the rational point of view, examining everything cold-bloodedly and logically, stopping up gaps, which required cementing, from a metaphysical standpoint. Scholasticism, however, could not proceed similarly. Its purpose was different, it was obliged to adopt a new orientation, stressing the religious, at the expense of the philosophic element. Aquinas did indeed accept the Aristotelian teaching of the four causes, including an efficient cause, which was supplied by God. How different a conception of God! In examining the Aristotelian philosophy one feels a certain detachment, a sincere desire on the part of the author to work out a system which should satisfy our intellectual curiosity. In Aquinas, we recognize a personal element, the wish to have this God a creator, not in the sense of supplying a need for the explanation of the world, but a Being who did it all for humans,—a Being whose love, mercy or their opposite could be invoked by our efforts or by our actions. His philosophy becomes a vehicle for human aspirations, for the individual desire, inferentially and indirectly, to have his needs and wishes considered exclusively. We do not mean to criticize adversely this attempt on the part of Scholastics to infuse a religious note into their philosophy, we simply wish to distinguish between metaphysics proper and religion. The conclusion is that while both attempt to treat of the unseen, of the ultimate, they proceed along different angles, one on faith, the other on reason, and they must not be confused.

Then again, the attempt to demonstrate the existence of God by theoretical arguments was bound to result in failure, for the subject matter of religion cannot ordinarily be given the cogency of a logical foundation. True, God may be postulated in the Kantian sense, or we may will to believe in His existence in accordance with the theory of William James, but the objection is directed against their attempt to prove rationally His existence. Descartes also made use of similar arguments for a like purpose, but then, Descartes, too, was very much under the influence of the Church.

Once you disregard the Scholastic metaphysics, what remains that may vitally affect us? Needless to say, as a religion we cannot discuss it, for that is not the purpose of this treatise. There is no doubt that the Church supported by the complex, intricate and specious reasoning of its adherents exerted great influence in moulding the religious thoughts, not only of its contemporaries, but also of many individuals since. That, however, as has already been mentioned, is beside the point. Its ethics, based on a sense of moderation, influenced by Plato and Aristotle, would indeed be worthwhile but for the fact that here, too, it was interwoven with foreign elements, which are not quite so appealing. To act properly because of reward or punishment by the Creator, cannot possibly be considered as ideal a doctrine as the insistence on the application of a sense of proportion to one's life, because reason dictates it to be the wisest course. Is it more effective to address ourselves as moral theorists, man's own sense of what is right and wrong, than to hold a mirror over his head in the form of God's punishment, if he should transgress? Moses, leading the Jews through the wilderness, was obliged to instill fear of the wrath of Jehovah for any sins, because he was dealing with a wild, untutored people. We trust that we have outgrown such a need and we are vain enough to feel that more refined methods may be even more effective in keeping us within the limits of moderation and propriety.



## CHAPTER II

### TRANSITION TO MODERN PHILOSOPHY

SCHOLASTICISM occupied the stage for several centuries, but it was bound to become supplanted by something more congenial to the human mental make-up. Faith is perfectly proper in its place, but it must not dominate to the exclusion of everything else. A great reaction set in against this blind dogmatism, this conception that all is well with the world, because the Lord of the Universe willed it. The reaction was all-comprehensive: it embraced all phases of human life. In the world of letters known as the Renaissance; all literature was influenced by a renewed interest in the classics; it breathed an air of freedom and emancipation. The whole post-Scholastic period, marking the transition between the philosophy of Middle Ages and Modern Philosophy, was ruled by the determination to cast off the shackles of the Church. It emphasized the dignity of the individual; it replaced reason on its high pedestal; it gave expression to the soaring spirits of man. The Fall of Constantinople, in 1453, when it was captured by the Turks, caused scholars gathered there to scatter all over Europe; the new methods of commercial intercourse were responsible for the exchange of ideas; these and similar ways the new development took place.

These influences permeated everywhere. Art, politics, literature, science and philosophy were actuated by them and new methods were devised for their study and growth. In science, Galileo, Kepler, Newton, Copernicus and many others may be mentioned as illustrating what heights the mind was capable of attaining, once it was permitted to have full independent sway. The Church, to be sure, fought valiantly

against the ascendancy of these tendencies. No better example can be adduced to show this than the burning of Giordano Bruno at the stake, because the religious body which was still very powerful felt that his thinking was tainted with heresy. He adopted the Copernican astronomical system. This held that the planets revolve around the sun—as a result heaven at one time may be under the earth; what then becomes of the consideration of heaven as God's dwelling, situated way above us? Bruno also taught that the universe is infinite, all-inclusive; since there can be only one such infinite, God, who certainly must be so designated, is then identified with the Universe. This is sheer heresy, for it spells pantheism, and religion must be based on the dualism between God and the world. Bruno attempted to distinguish between them by hairsplitting differences, but the Church fathers were astute enough to realize the evasiveness of these doctrines, hence they suppressed his philosophy and caused him to be burned at the stake, a delig' and purifying way of extinguishing human life, ver, in vogue at that time. Fear of the wrath of the Ch'en influenced the philosophy of Descartes, as we shall, - out in our study of his doctrines, to which we next turn our attention.



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